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FEMALE PIETY:

OR THE

Young Woman's Friend and Guide

THROUGH

LIFE TO IMMORTALITY.

BY JOHN ANGELL JAMES

AUTHOR OF "THE ANXIOUS ENQUIRER," "TRUE CHRISTIAN," "YOUNG MAN FROM HOME," "WIDOW DIRECTED," "CHRISTIAN PROFESSOR," "CHRISTIAN DUTY," "COURSE OF FAITH," "YOUNG MAN'S FRIEND." &c. &c.

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The Influence of Christianity on the Condition of Woman.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."—GALATIANS iii. 28.

WOMAN was the finishing grace of the creation. Woman was the completeness of man's bliss in Paradise. Woman was the cause of sin and death to our world. Woman was the means of our redemption. Woman is the mother of the human race; our companion, counselor, and comforter in the pilgrimage of life; or our tempter, our scourge, and our destroyer. Our sweetest cup of earthly happiness, or our bitterest draught of sorrow, is mixed and administered by her hand. She not only renders smooth or rough our path to the grave, but helps or hinders our progress to immortality. In heaven we shall bless God for her aid in assisting us to reach that blissful state, or amid the torments of unutterable woe in another region, we shall deplore the fatality of her influence.

Such is my reason for determining to address a course of monthly sermons to her sex. They have

been too much neglected in the ministrations of the sanctuary; an omission which must be traced to a morbid delicacy unworthy of the pulpit. Happily, this reproach does not appertain to the press, to which perhaps, in the opinion of some, this subject ought to be exclusively consigned. But why? Can any good and valid reason be assigned for shutting out from the house of God instructions to so important a class of the community? Many persons almost instinctively shrink from such addresses, from a fear lest matters should be introduced at which modesty would blush, and by which the finer sensibilities would be wounded. There is a prudishness in such feeling which can be justified neither by reason nor revelation. You may trust your pastor for discretion on such a subject, and feel tolerably certain that he will utter nothing which shall bring up a tinge of color on the most modest countenance, or inflict the slightest wound on the most fastidiously delicate mind.

It may be as well to announce in the opening sermon, that the whole course will be decidedly of a religious nature; more so than even the sermons to young men. For all the general directions and excellences of female character, I shall refer you to the various works which on these topics have issued from the press. *My* place is the pulpit—*my* subject is religion—*my* object is the soul—*my* aim is salvation. I view you, my female friends, as destined to another world, and it is my business to aid and stimulate you, "by patient continuance in well-

doing, to seek for glory, honor, and immortality," and to obtain eternal life. I look beyond the painted and gaudy scene of earth's fading vanities, to the everlasting ages, through which you must exist in torment or in bliss; and, God helping me, it shall not be my fault if you do not live in comfort, die in peace, and inherit eternal life.

Give me your most serious attention—what is more, give me your prayers—and especially pray for yourselves, that in listening to these discourses you may not be "hearers of the word only, but doers of it also." Come to each sermon in devout seriousness of mind. Lay aside all frivolity and levity. You are not invited to an entertainment, but to listen to matters of infinite moment, of everlasting importance. The lightness of the concert, the ball-room, and the theater, would be quite out of place when called to listen to words whereby you may be saved.

I could think of no subject with which more appropriately to commence these sermons, than that which you are now prepared to hear—THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON THE CONDITION OF WOMAN.

Our FIRST attention must be directed, of course, to *the condition of the sex beyond the boundaries of Christendom.*

It would seem, from the words of the original denouncement upon Eve for her transgression in eating the forbidden fruit, as if, while yet the first pair were innocent, there was a more entire equality

of condition and rights than there was, and is, after the fall. "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." This sounds like something penal, though perhaps some would regard it as merely predictive, and intended to describe the cruel and brutalizing tendency of sin, in turning man, who ought to be the loving companion of his wife, into a tyrant. How fearfully, *if* predictive, this sentence has been fulfilled, the degradation of woman—her wrongs, her sorrows, and her vices, in many cases, most painfully attest.

History, which will ever be found to accredit revelation, proves the fact that in most Pagan and Mohammedan nations, whether ancient or modern, woman has been cruelly and wickedly sunk below her proper level in social and domestic life. "Hated and despised from her birth, and her birth itself esteemed a calamity—in some countries not even allowed the rank of a moral and responsible agent—so tenderly alive to her own degradation that she acquiesces in the murder of her female offspring —immured from infancy—without education—married without her consent—in a multitude of instances sold by her parents—refused the confidence of her husband, and banished from his table—on his death doomed to the funeral pile, or to contempt that renders life a burden." In such a condition she has been the household drudge, or the mere object of passion. She has ministered to the gratification of man's indolence or appetites, but has not been his companion, his counselor, or his

comforter. In barbarous countries, she has been a public slave; in civilized ones, very generally a kind of private mistress. Her mind has been left untaught, as if incapable or unworthy of instruction. She has been not only imprisoned by jealousy in seclusion, but degraded and rendered vicious and miserable by polygamy—sometimes worshiped as a goddess, then fondled as a toy, then punished as a victim. She could never attain to dignity, and even with all her brightest charms, could rarely appear but with the beauty of a doll.

Exceptions to this, of some extent, may be made in favor of the polished Greeks and proud Romans; but only to some extent; for did time permit, and necessity require, it could be shown that even Athenian refinement and Roman virtue rarely gave to woman her just rank by the side of her husband, or her proper place in his affection, esteem, and confidence. The laws of Rome, it is true, gave to woman greater liberty and consideration than she had before received; still, she was so treated even there as to sink into degradation disgraceful to her purity, and destructive of her happiness. "No happy influence did she exert on the public or private welfare of the State. Politicians intrigued with her; ambition combined with passion to corrupt her; and her liberty degenerated into licentiousness. Through her influence, the streets of the capital were sometimes deluged with its best blood; and to such an extent was her profligacy carried, that among the decrees which passed the Senate

during the reign of Tiberius, against the licentiousness of female manners, it was ordained, 'that no woman whose grandfather, father, or husband, was a Roman knight, should be allowed to make her person venal.' The laws of a nation are an instructive and faithful history of its manners. If such was the condition of a Roman baroness, what must have been that of the subordinate classes?" Neither Paganism nor Mohammedanism ever yet understood the female character, or conceded woman's just claims. In many nations, the degradation has been excessive. You remember, probably, the reply of a pagan mother, who, having been expostulated with for the murder of her female child, contended that she had performed an act of mercy in sparing the babe the miseries of a woman's life. All travelers and all missionaries attest the fact of woman's humiliation, beyond the boundaries of revelation.*

If we go to the Bible, we shall learn that it is to Christianity, as distinct even from Judaism, that

* The reader is referred for detailed statements of the condition of woman in Pagan and Mohammedan countries, to a very able and interesting work by my friend, Dr. Cox, of Hackney, entitled, "Female Scripture Biography, with an Essay on what Christianity has done for Woman." At my instigation, I believe, the esteemed Author is about to publish a new edition of this very valuable work. It is to me surprising it should have been allowed so long to remain out of print. I am indebted to it for some of the ideas contained in this chapter, and am happy thus to announce its expected reappearance.

woman owes her true elevation. Polygamy is, and ever must be, fatal to female dignity and happiness: this, or at any rate concubinage, was practiced, no doubt, from mistaken views, by the patriarchs, not that it was ever positively sanctioned by God, for, from the beginning, he made one woman for one man, and by the providential and extraordinary general equality of the sexes as to numbers, he still proclaims, in unmistakable language, the law of monogamy—but to use an expression of the apostle, "he winked at"* these things: he did not regard it as innocent or convenient, yet he did not say much about it, or punish it, but left it to punish itself, which it most certainly did. If we examine the Levitical code we shall find that even this, though a Divine dispensation, contained some regulations which evinced that the time of woman's full emancipation from a state of inferiority had not yet arrived: and that it was reserved for that glorious and gracious economy under which we are placed to raise the female sex into their just position and influence in society. Christianity, as in other things, so in this, is an enlargement of privilege; and among other blessings which it confers, is its elevation of woman to her proper place and influence in the family and in society.

SECONDLY. I now go on to consider *what there is in Christianity that tends to elevate and improve the condition of woman.*

To the oppressive and cruel customs of Moham

* Acts xvii. 30.

medanism and Paganism, in their treatment of the female sex, Christianity presents a beautiful and lovely contrast; while to the partial restoration of female rights in Judaism, it adds a complete admission of their claims. It is the glory of our holy religion, and shows it to be an emanation from the Divine beneficence, and the friend of humanity at large, that it is the enemy of oppression in every form and every condition, and gives to every one his due. It tramples on no rights—it resents and resists all wrong; but not one of all the children of men is more indebted to its merciful and equitable reign than woman. From Christianity woman has derived her moral and social influence: yea, almost her very existence as a *social* being. The mind of woman, which many of the philosophers, legislators, and sages of antiquity had doomed to inferiority and imbecility, Christianity has developed. The gospel of Christ, in the person of its Divine founder, has descended into this neglected mine, which even wise men had regarded as not worth the working, and brought up a priceless gem, flashing with the light of intelligence, and glowing with the lovely hues of Christian graces. Christianity has been the restorer of woman's plundered rights, and has furnished the brightest jewels in her present crown of honor. Her previous degradation accounts, in part at least, for the instability of early civilization. It is impossible for society to be permanently elevated where woman is debased and servile. Wherever females are regarded as inferior

beings, society contains within itself, not, indeed, the elements of dissolution, yet the obstructions of all solid improvement. It is impossible that institutions and usages which trample upon all the very instincts of our nature, and violate the revealed law of God, should be crowned with ultimate success. Society may change in its external aspect, may exhibit the glitter of wealth—the refinements of taste—the embellishments of art, or the more valuable attainments of science and literature—but if the mind of woman remain undeveloped, her taste uncultivated, and her person enslaved, the social foundations are insecure, and the cement of society is feeble. Wherever Christianity is understood and felt, woman is free. The gospel, like a kind angel, opens her prison doors, and bids her walk abroad and enjoy the sunlight of reason, and breathe the invigorating air of intellectual freedom. And in proportion as a pure Christianity prevails, this will be ever found to be the case.

But all this is vague and general assertion. We now descend to the proof:

1. *Christianity elevates the condition of woman by its very genius as a system of universal equity and benevolence.* When it descended from heaven to earth, it was heralded into our world by the angel's song, "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth, peace and good will to man." The offspring of Infinite Love, it partakes entirely of the spirit, and reflects the character of its Divine Parent. It is essentially and unalterably the enemy of all injus-

tice, cruelty, and oppression; and the friend of all that is just, kind, and courteous. The rough, the brutal, and the ferocious, are alien from its spirit; while the tender, the gentle, and the courteous, are entirely homogeneous with its nature. Tyranny, whether in the palace or the parlor, it frowns upon with indignant countenance, while it is the friend of liberty, and the patron of all rights. The man who understands its genius, and lives under its inspiration, whether he be a monarch, a master, a husband, or a father, must be a man of equity and love. Christianity inspires the purest chivalry—a chivalry shorn of vanity, purified from passion, elevated above frivolity—a chivalry of which the animating principle is love to God; and the scene of its operation the domestic circle, rather than the tournament. He who is unjust or unkind to any one, especially to the weaker sex, betrays a total ignorance of, or a manifest repugnance to, the practical influence of the gospel of Christ. It is a mistake to suppose that the faith of Jesus is intended only to throw its dim religious light over the gloom of the cloister, or to form the character of the devotee; on the contrary it is pre-eminently a social thing, and is designed as well as adapted to form a character which shall go out into the world in a spirit of universal benevolence: to such a character the oppressor or degrader of woman can make no pretensions.

2. *The incarnation of Christ* tended to exalt the dignity of the female sex. His assuming humanity

has given a dignity to our nature which it had never received before, and could not have received in any other way. Christ is "the Pattern *Man*" of our race, in whom all the lines of humanity converge and unite, so far as the existence of our race goes. "When he took man's nature, he vouchsafed to ally himself to all the members of this extended series, by the actual adoption of that transmitted being, which related him to the rest. He not only became like men and dwelt among them, but he became man himself—an actual descendant from their first progenitor." *He was made man.* This is why the existence of human nature is a thing so precious. By the very manner of his birth, he seemed to associate himself with our nature. This appears to be the meaning of the apostle in his quotation of the eighth Psalm, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, to show the dignity conferred upon humanity by its being assumed by so glorious a person as our Lord Jesus Christ in his divine nature was. If, then, manhood is honored by Christ assuming it, how much more is woman exalted, who, in addition to this, was made the instrument of giving birth to the humanity of Christ!

It is emphatically said by the apostle, "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, MADE OF A WOMAN, made under the law."—Gal. iv. 4. In the person of the Virgin Mary, and by her giving birth to that holy Being that was born of her, the sex was elevated. True, it was a personal distinction, that she should be the mother

of our Lord's humanity; and though she has been by the apostate Church of Rome wickedly exalted into an object of idolatrous homage, all generations justly call her blessed. Yet the honor is not limited to herself, but passes over to the sex which she represented; and it is this to which the apostle alludes. He does not even mention the honored individual, says nothing of the Virgin Mary, but dwells upon the abstract, general term, "made of *a woman.*" Every female on earth, from that day to this, has had a relative elevation, by and in that wonderful transaction. Woman is not the mother of God, as the Papists absurdly, and, as I think, almost blasphemously, say; but the mother of that humanity only which was mysteriously united with Divinity. Does not this great fact say, "Let the sex which alone was concerned in giving birth to the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, be ever held in high estimation."

3. *The personal conduct of our Lord during his sojourn upon earth*, tended to exalt the female sex to a consideration before unknown.

Follow Him through the whole of his earthly career, and mark the attention he most condescendingly paid to, and as condescendingly received from, the female sex. He admitted them to his presence, conversed familiarly with them, and accepted the tokens of their gratitude, affection, and devotedness. See him accompanying his mother to the marriage-feast of Cana in Galilee. See him conversing with the woman of Samaria, "instructing

her ignorance, enduring her petulance, correcting her mistakes, awakening her conscience, converting her soul, and afterward employing her as a messenger of mercy and salvation to her neighbors. See him rebuking his disciples for discouraging the approach of mothers and their infants. See him compassionating the widow of Nain, and restoring her son to life. See him in the little family of Bethany, blending his sympathies with the bereaved sisters; and on another occasion entering into familiar conversation with this same Martha and Mary, faithfully rebuking one, and kindly commending the other. See him receiving the offerings of those women who ministered to him of their substance. Witness the attendance of pious women upon him in the last scenes of his life. It was on Mary Magdalene that the honor of the first manifestation of the risen Saviour was made; and thus a woman was preferred to apostles, and made the messenger of the blissful news to *them*. "The frequent mention," says Doddridge, "which is made in the evangelists of the generous courage and zeal of some pious women in the service of Christ, and especially of the faithful and resolute constancy with which they attended him in those last scenes of his suffering, might be very possibly intended to obviate that haughty and senseless contempt which the pride of men, often irritated by those vexations to which their own irregular passions have exposed them, has in all ages affected to throw on that sex, which probably, in the sight of God,

constituted by far the better half of mankind, and to whose care and tenderness the wisest and best of men generally owe, and ascribe much of the daily comfort and enjoyment of their lives."

Compare this behavior toward the sex, the chaste, holy, dignified conduct of our Lord, with the polygamy licentiousness, and impurities of Mohammed; not merely as evidence of their claims, but as regards their influence upon the condition of woman while the one does every thing by example and by precept to corrupt, to debase, and to degrade, the other does every thing to purify, to elevate, and to bless. The conduct of the Arabian enthusiast and impostor, and not less the boast of his followers and admirers, are too revolting for description—almost for allusion. But, on the contrary, what one syllable of the Saviour's utterance, or what one scene of his life was there which tainted the immaculate purity of his language, or left the slightest stain upon the more than snow-like sanctity of his character? What part of his conduct might not be unvailed and described before a company of the most modest, and most delicate, and even most prudish-minded females in existence? His treatment of woman raised her from her degradation without exalting her above her level. He rescued her from oppression without exciting her vanity, and invested her with dignity without giving her occasion for pride. He allowed her not only to come into his presence, but to minister to his comfort, and inspired her with awe, while he conciliated

her grateful and reverent affection, and thus taught man how to behave to woman, and what return woman was to make to man. The conduct of Jesus Christ toward the female sex, was one of the most attractive excellences of his beautiful charac ter, though perhaps one of the least noticed; and to him they must ever point, as not only the Saviour of their souls, but as the advocate of their rights, and the guardian of their peace.

4. *The virtual abolition of polygamy* by Christianity is a vast improvement in the condition of woman. Wherever this prevails, and as long as it prevails, the female sex must ever be in a state of degradation and misery. "Experience has abundantly and painfully proved that polygamy debases and brutalizes both the body and the soul, and renders society incapable of those generous and refined affections, which, if duly cultivated, would be found to be the inheritance even of our fallen nature. Where is an instance in which polygamy has not been the source of many and bitter calamities in the domestic circle and in the state? Where has it reared a virtuous and heaven-taught progeny? Where has it been distinguished for any of the moral virtues, or, rather, where has it not been distinguished for the most fearful degeneracy of manners?" By this practice, which has prevailed so extensively through nearly all countries and all ages where Christianity was not known, marriage loses all its tenderness, its sanctity, and its reciprocal confidence—the cup of connubial felicity is ex-

changed for that of mere animal pleasure—woman panders to the appetite of man, instead of ministering to his comfort—and the home assumes much of the character of a brothel. There may be several mistresses, but there can be only one wife, and though there may be mothers, they are without a mother's affection; presenting a scene of endless envy and jealousy, before which domestic comfort must ever retire, to make way for mere sensual gratification. No stimulus to improvement—to fidelity—to ambition to please, can be felt, where the individual may be supplanted the next month by a new favorite. And thus there is no room and little occasion for the display of those virtues which constitute female honor. Here, then, is the glorious excellence of Christianity; inasmuch as it revives and re-establishes the original institute of marriage—restores to woman her fortune, her person, her rank, and thus her happiness, of all which she has been cheated by polygamy, and has thus raised the condition of the female sex to the elevation to which they were destined by their wise and beneficent Creator. True it is that Christianity has not by direct, explicit, and positive precept, effected this great change, so beneficial not only to the sex, but to society, yet it *has* done so by an implication so clear as not to be mistaken as to the reality of the fact, nor to be resisted as to its obligation. All its provisions, its precepts, and its promises, go on the supposition of each man who is a husband being the husband but of one wife.

And we would here take occasion to remark with emphasis upon the adaptation of Christianity to promote the well-being of the community at large, by advocating and protecting the rights of *all;* by opposing *all* those evil practices, which insinuate mischief and misery into the great human family; and by upholding those institutions which in their turn uphold the interests of nations. The springs of national prosperity rise from beneath the family hearth—the domestic constitution is the mould where national character is cast—and that mould must of necessity take its form from the unity, the sanctity, and inviolability of marriage.

5. The *jealousy with which Christianity guards the sanctity of the marriage tie* must ever be regarded as having a favorable influence upon the condi tion of woman. Let this be relaxed or impaired, and that moment woman sinks in dignity, in purity, and in happiness. There have been nations in which the facility of divorce took the place of polygamy, and of course, was accompanied with some of its vices, and many of its miseries too. This was eminently the case with ancient Rome. It is true this applied rather to Rome in the time of the Empire, than during the continuance of the Republic, examples of which will be found in the annals of its history, and allusions to it in the pages of its poets. Let the nuptial tie be weakened, and the wife lives in perpetual fear that her union is placed in jeopardy by a law of which her husband may take advantage, and at the instigation of passion or

caprice dissolve the bond—and without either penalty, remorse, or shame, dismiss her from her home—and there is an end to her peace, and perhaps to her purity. For it is to be recollected that it is *she* who has most to dread from the license of divorce. *She* is likely to be the victim of such a liberty. With what devout and reverential gratitude should she turn then to that Divine Teacher, who has interposed with his own personal authority to strengthen the marriage bond, and to guard it from being severed at the demand of illicit passion, or the dictates of humor or caprice. How should she rejoice to hear *Him* say, "Whoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her that is put away, doth commit adultery."—Matt. xix. 9. The indulgence granted to the Jews of greater latitude and liberty in this matter, was thus suspended by Christianity; a greater security provided for woman's honor and felicity; and a broader basis laid for domestic harmony and happiness. If it were only for this, Christianity deserves the gratitude of mankind. It is only half its glory that it has abolished the custom of *many* wives; its crowning achievement is that it has protected the rights, the dignity, and the comfort of the *one* wife. It has shut out intruders from her home, and guaranteed the safe and permanent possession of it to herself.

6. I may surely mention *the equal participation of religious blessings* to which women are admitted

by the Christian religion. How explicitly and how firmly has the apostle claimed for woman all the blessings obtained by Christ for the human race, where he says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."—Gal. iii. 28. There is woman's charter of all the blessings of salvation—there is woman's proof of equal consideration in the sight of God—there is woman's claim to equal rank in the institutes of man. There is not a blessing necessary to eternal life, which they do not receive in the same measure and in the same manner as the other sex. There is a popular tradition among the Mahommedans, which is prevalent among them to this day, that women are not permitted to enter Paradise: the houris of that region being a special creation for the purpose. What a degradation is there in such an idea: this Mohammedanism, and it is in its own spirit, and harmonizes with its own genius, which regards woman more as the slave of man's passions, than as the companion of his life. Christianity places the wife by the side of the husband—the daughter by the side of the father—the sister by the side of the brother—and the maid by the side of the mistress—at the altar of the family—in the meeting of the church—at the table of the Lord—and in the congregation of the sanctuary. Male and female meet together at the cross, and will meet in the realms of glory. Can any thing more effectually tend to raise and sustain the condition of woman than this?

God in all his conduct—Christ in his glorious undertaking—and the Holy Spirit in his gracious work—give her her proper place in the world, by giving her a proper place in the church. It is for *her* with peculiar emphasis to say, "God, who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us, hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places."—Ephes. ii. 4–6.

Well have women understood their privileges, for look into our congregations and churches, and see how largely they are composed of females. How many more of their sex than of the other avail themselves of the offer of gospel mercy, and come under the influence of religion. It is in the female bosom, however we may account for the fact, that piety finds a home on earth. The door of woman's heart is often thrown wide open to receive this divine guest, when man refuses it an entrance. And it is by thus yielding to the power of godliness, and reflecting upon others the beauties of holiness, that she maintains her standing and her influence in society. Under the sanctifying power of religion she ascends to the glory not only of an intelligent, but of a spiritual existence—not only gladdens by her presence the solitary hours of man's existence, and beguiles, by her converse and sympathy, the rough and tedious paths of life; but in some measure new-modifies, purifies, and sanctifies him by making him feel how awful goodness is.

7. But the finishing stroke which Christianity gives in elevating the condition of women, is, *by in-*

viting and employing their energies and i
promoting the spread of religion in the w
thus carrying out, through them also, the great purposes of God in the redemption of the world by the mission of his Son. To them, in common with others, the apostle says, "That ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."—1 John i. 3. The honor so liberally bestowed upon the pious women of antiquity, in ministering to the personal wants of the Saviour, and in being so constantly about his person, was the least of those distinctions designed for them by our holy religion. They bear an exalted place in those acts and offices which were carried on for the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world. How instructive and impressive is it to hear an apostle say, "Help those women which labored with me in the gospel."—Phil. iv. 3. What a register of names and offices of illustrious females do we find in Romans xvi. Priscilla, Paul's helper; "Mary, who bestowed much labor upon us;" "Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labored in the Lord." "Phebe, the servant of the church at Cenchrea," who was sent to the church at Rome, and intrusted with so momentous a commission as to bear to that community of Christians the Epistle to the Romans, which, if we may lawfully compare one portion of Scripture with another, is the most precious portion of divine revelation. In addition to all this, there can be but little doubt that in the primitive church, not only were women occasionally endowed by the

spirit with the miraculous gifts of prophesying, but were also employed in the office of deaconesses. The Christian church, in modern times, has gone backward in the honor put upon the female character. The primitive age of Christianity was in advance of ours in the respect thus paid to the female sex, by officially employing them in the services of the church, and in the wisdom which made use of such available and valuable resources. It has been said that the usages of society have somewhat changed since that time, so as to render the services of women less necessary now than they were then. The friendly and social intercourse of the sexes was more restricted, and females were kept in greater seclusion. Some truth, no doubt, there is in these assertions; but perhaps not so much as is by some imagined. Both general and sacred history present them to us mingling in the society, and sharing the occupations of the other sex.

THIRDLY. We now remark that not only does Christianity thus *tend*, by its own nature and provisions, to exalt the female character, but it *has accomplished this* wherever it has prevailed. If we consult the pages of history, whether ancient or modern—whether Eastern or Western, we shall find that wherever the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ has been successful, there has it achieved the emancipation of woman from her thralldom, and rescued her from degradation. I refer to modern Europe in proof of this, and to America. And may I not affirm that this emancipation and elevation are in

proportion to the purity of that Christianity which has thus been diffused? Is it not a triumph and a trophy of Christianity to be able to point to the most polished nations of the globe as being, at any rate, *professedly* Christian; and at the same time to say, "Look at the improved condition of the female sex?" What a contrast is in this respect presented in those countries to all Pagan and Mohammedan nations.

If we refer to the records of modern missions, we shall find abundant proof of what the gospel does for the elevation of the female character. It has abolished the suttee in India, and the widow is no longer immolated on the same pile which consumes her departed husband. It has stopped the suicidal prostration before the idol's car in Ceylon—the drudgery of the wives of all savage tribes—the incarcerating seclusion of Mohammedan and Pagan nations—the polygamy, the infanticide, and the concubinage of all countries whither it has gone. Yes, Christianity in various parts of the world has, in modern times, proved itself woman's emancipator and friend in many, very many thousand instances. It has brought woman from under the disastrous influence of the pale crescent of the impostor of Mecca, and placed her in all the irradiating and enlivening splendor of the Sun of Righteousness. It has rescued her from what I must consider the baleful power of the crucifix, and thrown over her the elevating attractions of the cross.

But there is another and a more familiar way

and one nearer home, in which we may see how Christianity, even in this Christian and Protestant nation, has benefited and raised the condition of millions of once wretched and degraded women; made such not by their own misconduct, but by the vices and cruelty of their husbands. How many wives have been reduced to a kind of domestic slavery by the drunkenness, the infidelity, and tyranny of those who had pledged themselves to love and cherish them. Christianity, in its power, has, in myriads of instances, laid hold of the hearts of these men, and changed them from vice to holiness; and now, the *husband* is as much changed as the *man*, and among other evidences of the reality of the change, and the manifestations of its excellence, is his altered conduct at home, where woman becomes his wife, instead of being his drudge, his slave, and his victim. Christianity has thus carried out its genius and its precepts into the actual elevation of the female character wherever it has gone. The chivalry of the dark and middle ages, whimsical as the institution seemed, which combined religion, valor, and gallantry, no doubt did something to accomplish this end. I do not dispute the truth of the remarks made by a French writer, quoted in a popular work entitled, "Woman's Mission," where he says, that women, shut up in their castellated towers, civilized the warriors who despised their weakness, and rendered less barbarous the passions and the prejudices which they themselves shared. It was they who directed the savage pas-

sions and brute force to an unselfish aim—the defense of the weak, and added to courage the only virtue then recognized—humanity. But even chivalry derived its existence, in some measure, from religion. And, after all, how inferior in its nature, and how different in its influence, was this system of romance, to the dignified principles and holy influence of Christianity! It did very well to figure at the joust and the tournament; in the hall of the baron, and in the circle of the fair; but its influence in the domestic scene was still slight as compared with that of the institutions of the New Testament. It was rather the romance of female rights and privileges, than a concession of them made by intelligence, a sense of justice, and an obedience to the Divine authority; and it may be questioned whether many an illustrious knight did not, when the hour of imagination had passed away, and the ardor of passion had cooled, in the absence of Christian principles, crush and break the heart which he had been so anxious to win. It is the glory of Christianity that it supplies principles which are rooted in the soul, and sway the conscience, instead of appeals to the imagination, the senses, and the passions; and that instead of leading its possessor to expend his admiration of woman amid the exciting scenes of public amusement, it teaches and influences him first of all to contemplate her where her charms are less meretriciously adorned—in the retirement of social intercourse, and there to enjoy them, within the hallowed cir

domestic life. It allows of no senseless adoration like that which chivalry promoted, and which, from its very excess, is likely to be followed with recoil or collapse. What Christianity does for woman is, to fit her neither to be the goddess nor the slave, but the friend and companion of man, and to teach man to consider her in this honorable and amiable aspect.

It is now quite time to consider what practical inferences are to be deduced from this subject. And,

1. Do we not see in it *a beautiful exhibition of the transcendent excellence of our holy religion?* In every view we can take of Christianity, whether we contemplate its aspect toward another world or this, in its relations to God or society, in its sublime doctrines, or its pure morality, we see a form of inimitable beauty, sufficient to captivate every heart but that which is petrified by false philosophy, avowed infidelity, or gross immorality. But never does it appear more lovely than in its relation to woman. What *equity* in holding the balances so impartially between the sexes! What *kindness* in throwing its shield over the weaker vessel! What *wisdom* in sustaining the rank and claims of these whose influence is so important to society, and yet so limiting those claims that they shall not be carried to such a length as to defeat their own end! What *nice discrimination* in fixing her place where her power can be most advantageously employed for the cultivation of her own virtues, and the ben

efit of society! "Behold Christianity, then, walking forth in her purity and greatness to bless the earth, diffusing her light in every direction, distributing her charities on either hand, quenching the flames of lust, and the fires of ambition, silencing discord, spreading peace, and creating all things new. Angels watch her progress celebrate her influence, and anticipate her final triumphs! The moral creation brightens beneath her smiles, and owns her renovating power. At her approach man loses his fierceness, and woman her chains; each becomes blessed in the other, and God is glorified in both."*

2. May we not affirm that the treatment of woman, by Christianity, is *one of the proofs of its divine origin?* In this view of it, we include Judaism, with which it must ever be associated as containing a full development of the great truths contained in the symbols of that ceremonial dispensation; though, as we have already shown, even this is behind the higher excellence of the Christian economy. We have already seen how both Mohammedanism and Paganism degrade the female character and sex. It would seem, therefore, that man, left to himself, would never have set up a religion which dealt equitably and kindly with the female sex. And what *has* infidelity, without a religion, done for them? What *would* it do for them? Degrade them by demoralizing them. The patrons of impurity and licentiousness—infidels at heart—

* Dr. Cox's Essay.

have put on the cloak of the philosopher, and maxims the most licentious have found their way into works of pretended morality, and have been inculcated with the airs of a moral sage. Atheism, the most undisguised, has made its appearance, and alas, alas! that it should boast of a well-known priestess to conduct its homage at the shrine and upon the altar of chance! Before skepticism had reached this depth of error, and arrived at these gloomy regions of a godless void—while yet it lingered on the shores of deism, it manifested its demoralizing tendency. Hume taught that adultery, when known, was a slight offense; and when unknown, no offense at all. Bolingbroke openly and violently attacked every important truth, and every serious duty. Particularly he licensed lewdness, and cut up chastity and decency by the roots. Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, the most serious of the early English deists, declared that the indulgence of lust is no more to be blamed than the thirst of a fever, or the drowsiness of lethargy. Nor have modern infidels been behind their predecessors. Godwin and Owen have attacked the marriage tie. And let the annals of the first French Revolution, that terrible eruption from the volcano of atheism, tell by the history of Mirabeau, its type, both as regards politics and morals, what infidelity would do to corrupt and degrade the female sex. Woman's virtue, dignity, honor, and happiness, are nowhere safe but under the protection of the Word of God. The Bible is the egis of the female sex. Beneath

this protection she is secure in her rights, her dignity, and her peace. It is her vine and fig-tree, under which, in calm repose, she may enjoy the shade of the one, and relish the fruit of the other, none daring to make her afraid. It protects her purity from taint, and her peace from disturbance. Let woman know her friend, and her enemy too. An infidel of either sex is the foe of our species, either individually or collectively viewed; but a female infidel is the most dangerous and destructive of the furies, from whom, in the prosecution of her suicidal career, the virtuous of her sex recoil with horror, and whom the vicious regard as the abettor, it may be, the unintentional one, of their crimes. Woman! regard thy Saviour for the next world as thine emancipator for this present one; love the Bible as the charter of thy liberty, and the guardian of thy bliss; and consider the church of Christ as thine asylum from the wrongs of oppression, and the arts of seduction.

3. Let woman seek to *discharge her obligations to Christianity*. Grateful she ought to be, for immense are the favors which have been conferred upon her. It is enough to demand her thankfulness, that in common with man, she is the object of divine love, redeeming mercy, and the subject of immortal hope; but in addition to this, she is rescued from oppression and exalted to honor in the present world. In regard to this, your obligations to Christianity are immense. You owe infinitely more to it than you ever reflect upon, or than you will ever

be able to cancel. Often as you look round upon your condition in society, and especially as often as you contrast your situation with that of women in Pagan countries, let a glow of gratitude warm your heart and add intensity to the fervor with which you exclaim, "Precious Bible." Yes, doubly precious to *you*, as your friend for both worlds. How shall woman discharge her obligations? In two ways. First, in yielding up her heart and life to the influence and service of her benefactor—in the way of faith, holiness, and divine love. Female *piety* is the best, the only sincere expression of female gratitude to God. An irreligious woman is also an ungrateful one. She that loves not Christ, whomsoever else she may love, and however chaste and pure that love may be, is living immeasurably below her obligations, and has a stain of guilt upon her heart and her conscience which no other virtue can efface or conceal.

Her obligations should also be discharged by seeking to extend that benign system to others which has exerted so beneficial an influence upon herself. Of all the supporters of our missionary schemes, whether they are formed to evangelize the heathen abroad, or reform the sinful at home, women should be, as indeed they generally are, the most zealous, the most liberal, and the most prayerful supporters. Wherever she turns her eye over the distant regions of our earth, at least wherever Paganism or Mohammedanism throw their baleful shadow—and alas! how large a portion of the earth

that is—there she beholds her sex degraded and oppressed. From China's vast domain—from India's sunny plains—from Persia's flowery gardens—from the snows of Arctic regions—from the sterile deserts of Arabia—and from the burning line of Africa—woman lifteth up her voice from the midst of her wrongs, her woes, and her miseries, piteously imploring, "COME OVER AND HELP US." The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, but her groans are deeper, her cries louder, than those of any other. Floated upon the wings of every breeze, and borne on the bosom of every wave that touches our shore, from those regions of sin and sorrow comes the petition to Christian females in this country for the blessings of Christianity. Cold, thankless, and unfeeling must be that heart which is unaffected by such an appeal, and makes no effort to respond to it—which prompts to no interest in our missionary schemes, and leads to no liberality in their support. The Millennium will be especially woman's jubilee, and as no groan is deeper than hers during the reign of sin and sorrow, so no joy will be louder than hers under the reign of Christ. It belongs therefore to her to be most fervent in the cry of the church, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

The Conspicuous Place which Woman occupies in Holy Scripture.

'After this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands."—1 PETER, iii. 5

It will probably be objected against some of the subjects selected for this course of Sermons, that they are not exclusively appropriate to the class of persons to whom they are addressed—that is, *Young* Women. This, however, so far from being a fault, is an excellence. Most conditions of human life are prospective, and have not only some proximate object and duties connected with them, but also some ultimate ones to which the others look onward; and he who would lead persons to the right discharge of the *whole* range of their obligations, must set before them the future as well as the present, especially when the due preparation for the remote must not only be *made* in the present, but must be considered to a considerable extent the *object* and *design* of the present. Neither childhood nor youth is an ultimate condition of human existence, but each leads on, looks to, and prepares for

manhood or womanhood. Surely it must be appropriate then to those who are already arrived at adult age, or are fast approaching it, to have the whole view of their future condition laid before them, at least in general outline. How else can they prepare for it?

Those to whom the following discourses are addressed, are supposed to have arrived at that period of youth, when the judgment is sufficiently matured and reflective to be capable of studying and appreciating their future relations and duties, and who, therefore, ought to have the subject laid before them. Who can be rightly educated for any future situation, from whom it is concealed till all its obligations and responsibilities burst suddenly upon them? True, there is in some minds an almost instinctive kind of perception of what is proper to be done in any new conjuncture of circumstances, so that almost without training, they are prepared for whatever situation is before them. But this is not the case with all. The greater number of mankind must, as far as possible, be trained for the various situations of life. As in the education of a boy, especially when learning a trade or profession, the future good tradesman, master, father, and citizen, must be set before him as that for which he must prepare himself; so in the training of young women, the whole of womanhood, in its full expansion, ripened excellences, and complete relations, obligations, and responsibilities must be laid before them. We know that there is much which can be learned

only from experience, yet is there much also that may be learned by observation, reading, and reflection. Mothers and governesses, authors and preachers, who take up the subject, should ever bear in recollection that the girl is to develop in the woman; and in teaching the girl, should ever have their eye fixed ultimately upon the woman, and should with all possible earnestness fix the eye of the girl also upon her future womanhood. Not that she is to be so taken up with the remote as to neglect the proximate—the future as to neglect the present—or to acquire that precocious matronly air and gravity which shall repress the ardor and vivacity of youth, and by anticipated cares and solicitudes go out to meet half-way the coming troubles of life. Remember, then, my young female friends—and the lesson can not be too deeply impressed upon your minds—that the seeds of woman's life-long excellences must be sown in the spring-time of life; and it must be done in part by her own hand, though aided and taught by others to prepare the soil. The very flowers of womanly excellence she would have to grow in her future character, must be previously and carefully selected, and be contemplated and anticipated by her in all their full-blown beauty and their richest fragrance, even while she is yet in youth.

With these remarks as our justification in presenting to the younger of the sex, what in fact appertains to the more advanced in years, we now advance to the subject of the present sermon.

When we consider the importance of woman in

the great human family, it would be strange if in a volume given by inspiration of God for regulating the conduct, and promoting the happiness of mankind, she had no place assigned to her, commensurate with the influence she is destined to exert. The Bible gives us an account of the origin and construction of society, and is designed, among other and still higher purposes, to direct its movements and promote its welfare. This it could not do, if it left out woman; or if it failed to bring her prominently forward, or did not prescribe with much form and detail, her rank, her mission, and her duties. In the coins which were struck in the reigns of our William and Mary, when the wife was queen regnant as well as queen consort, the busts of both husband and wife were represented on the face of the coin—the king in front, and the queen next—so if a frontispiece were designed for the human history of the Bible, man and woman should be exhibited in something of a similar manner, with this inscription round the two-fold portrait—MALE AND FEMALE CREATED HE THEM.

The subject of this Sermon was entered upon in the last; it will be here continued and expanded into wider dimensions. *Man*, of course, is the chief subject of revealed truth. He occupies there, as he does in society, the first place. More is said *of* him, *to* him, and *by* him, than applies to woman. He is the prime actor, but not the sole one, in the great drama of Providence, as it is developed in the pages of inspiration. His companion in pilgrimage is

brought forward into notice, and does not sink into his shadow, or peep out occasionally only from behind his more portly form and loftier stature. *Her* name and history, her virtues and vices, her services and sorrows, occupy a considerable space in the holy canon. She has no right to complain that she is overlooked or forgotten, or that she is thrust into a corner and hidden from observation. There is more than enough said about her to make her contented. She ought to be thankful, and without divine grace, may even be tempted to be vain. She can not be deprived of self-respect, or of the respect of others, on account of the manner in which she is treated in the Scriptures. In this respect the Bible stands a bright and beautiful contrast to the Koran.

We shall FIRST of all advert to the account which the Bible gives of *woman's creation and fall*, in the book of Genesis. We would, in passing, remark, that it is to revelation, and to that alone, we are indebted for our knowledge of the origin of the human species. Without the Mosaic account of the creation, we know neither the date nor the source of the family of man. There is no other oracle which can give a response to the question, "Whence came we?" This furnishes an answer, and satisfies the inquirer: but not as some would pretend, with a mere allegorical history, but with a veritable fact. I need not recite the details of the scenes of Paradise, but only refer to them. It is at once a beautiful and a melancholy record. We there see woman as she came from the hand of the Creator with a body that com-

bined every charm which could captivate the being for whose companionship she was designed, and a soul that comprehended every virtue that could adorn the character, and make her an object of reverent affection. Her creation was peculiar, but not unworthy the Great Being that made her, of herself, or of him from whose own body she was derived. Her very origin seemed to dignify both her husband and herself. She was a part of his own frame. Here was *his* honor. She was formed of organized and vitalized matter, and not of mere dust—here was *her* distinction. Who can describe, or who conceive the thoughts or emotions of this holy pair at their first interview? Our great bard has attempted it in his immortal verse, where he says,

> "I beheld her, not far off,
> Such as I saw her in my dream, adorn'd
> With what all earth or heaven could bestow
> To make her amiable; on she came,
> Led by her heavenly Maker, though unseen,
> And guided by His voice—
> Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
> In every gesture; dignity and love.
> I, overjoy'd, could not forbear aloud—
> —Thou hast fulfill'd
> Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,
> Giver of all things fair! But fairest this
> Of all thy gifts! nor enviest. I now see
> Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself
> Before me: Woman is her name; of man
> Extracted: for this cause he shall forego
> Father and mother, and to his wife adhere;
> And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul."

Painters and sculptors have joined with poets, to represent to the senses and the imagination the first woman, in all her untainted loveliness. It is the Scriptures, be it recollected, that supplies to them all the enrapturing subject of their art.

Thus far we see woman, man's companion, in holiness and bliss, tenanting with him the Garden of Eden, enjoying its beauties, and helping to preserve them. With him, joining in the morning song and vesper hymn. Confessing no sin, for they had committed none; pouring out no sorrow, for they felt none; and disburdening themselves of no care, for none pressed upon them. All was praise, while their own notes of thanksgiving, blended with the melodies of the grove and the music of the fields, caused even the ear of God to listen with delight, and to say, "It is all very good."

Alas, how soon and how suddenly changed this scene of Paradisaic bliss! Man was placed in Eden not as we shall be in heaven, if we are so happy as to reach it, in a state of confirmed happiness; but as we are now upon earth, in a condition of probation. His submission to God must be tested; and this was done in a manner that exactly suited his condition. A garden became his state of innocence as a residence; and the fruit of a particular tree equally well suited his circumstances for the proof of his entire and implicit subjection. The test was as easy as it was rational and suitable. Traditions of the state of primeval felicity are current among many nations. They are discoverable in Grecian

and Roman history, in the fables of the gardens of Flora, of Alcinous, and of the Hesperides; and in the pleasing fiction of the poet's golden age. To induce Adam to eat of the forbidden fruit was the scheme of Satan for his fall. It is difficult to conceive in what other way he *could* tempt them. And how did he succeed? You know the melancholy sequel. The assault of the tempter was made upon woman. *She* was the selected victim of his wiles. It is evident, therefore, that he regarded her, while in a state of innocence, as more likely and easily to be vanquished than man; and thus considered her, even then, as the weaker vessel. At the same time, does it not seem as if he had marked her out from the beginning, as the chief instrument for accomplishing his future purposes of mischief toward the family of man? Events have justified the sagacity of his malignity: for to her influence how much may be traced of the crimes and calamities which desolate our earth. He saw in the conduct of the first pair the love which woman inspires and cherishes, and was confident that if he could subdue her, he might leave her to subdue the man.

The apostle in referring to this event says, "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was first in the transgression."—1 Tim. ii. 14. From the very creation, woman has shown a feebler power of resistance, a greater pliancy of disposition, than man. How Satan should know this, we are not informed; but that he did know it, is evident from his commencing the assault on Eve instead of Adam.

The passage just quoted seems to imply all this. It is not meant that Adam did not sin, and was not deceived by the tempter, but that the woman opposed a feebler resistance to the temptation than he would have done; and that the temptation, as applied to her mind, would have been ineffectual on him. To tempt and seduce *him* to sin, there needed all the soft persuasions, the entreaties, and example of his wife. Satan understood this, and approached man not with the specious argument of the serpent, but through the allurements of his wife. Some have supposed that Adam was not at all deceived by the tempter; that he saw at once all his suggestions were lies; but that foreseeing what Eve had done, how she had plunged herself into ruin, he, out of mere love to her, and with his eyes open, determined to share her fate. But the apostle's words do not necessarily convey this; but merely that he was not deceived *first*, nor directly, by the tempter, but after, and by his wife. Her fall was occasioned by the deception of Satan alone; his by the deception of Satan, aided by the persuasion of the woman.*

SECONDLY. Having considered the Scriptural account of woman's condition at the creation, and the means by which, through her, the human race was brought into its present state of sin and misery, we may next notice the very explicit and frequent mention which is made in the Scripture *of her numerous relations in social life, with the descriptions it gives of her various characters.* It certainly tends deeply

* See Barnes's Note on the passage.

to impress us with the importance of woman, and to raise her in her own and in our estimation, to see how every one of her relations is constantly brought before us on the sacred page, as if the duties connected with each were of vast consequence to society. Not one is omitted: all are recognized and dwelt upon. Woman is ever before us in one or other of her many relations to the community.

Not only is there much said about the son, but also about the DAUGHTER. This relationship is not only included in the generic term of *children*, but it is also set out by itself in its own species. How commonly is it mentioned in connection with the children of the other sex, and "the sons and the *daughters*" are spoken of. A beautiful instance of which we have in the words of the Psalmist, "That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; and our *daughters* may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace." Or, "as corner pillars, wrought like those of a palace," that is, in their fittest and best proportions, combining strength, beauty, and symmetry, both of body and of soul: than which, no comparison can be more elegant and delicate. In the exquisite poetry of the Hebrews, how commonly is this relationship employed as the metaphor of countries, states, and cities! Jerusalem comes before us as "*the* DAUGHTER *of Zion*," sometimes jubilant in her prosperity, and then, as in the lamentations of Jeremiah, covered with sackcloth and bathed in tears.

The word SISTER occurs almost in every portion

of the Word of God, like a floweret, lowly and lovely amid others of larger growth and more imposing form and color. How sweet and gentle a spirit is sometimes seen in that sister's form amid her brothers' more robust ones; and what a softening influence does the spell of her fascinating tenderness throw over their ruder natures. Thus we are reminded by Scripture, that the younger female branches of the family are to be thought of as having their separate claims upon parental regard and brotherly affections. How many families are laid open in the Bible to our view, of which the *sisters*, as well as the brothers, are brought prominently into notice.

How much may it be supposed *would* be said about the WIFE: and how much *is* said about the close and endearing relations. To form the character, and direct the conduct of the *wife*, is worth all the pains that have been bestowed by innumerable writers;* and we might have been very sure, even before we had read a page of revelation, that much would be there found touching this relationship. The book of Proverbs, that admirable manual for domestic and social life, is quite a manual for wives, as well as for every other member of the family circle. Unusual pains seem taken for the right

* Mrs. Ellis's admirable works to females, as Woman, Wives, Mothers, and Daughters, need no recommendation of mine. The public have already set their seal of approbation upon them, by the several editions through which they have passed.

formation of *her* character. How frequently and how impressively does Solomon refer to woman, as sustaining this close and tender relation. In what exalted and glowing terms does he speak of it, when it comprehends the graces and the excellences which it should always possess, "Whoso findeth a wife, findeth a good thing."—Prov. xviii. 22. "A prudent wife is from the Lord."—xix. 14. Who has ever read, or can read, without admiration, his beautiful description of a virtuous woman, in the closing chapter of his inestimable Proverbs? Can we wonder that he who had this elevated idea of the value of such a companion, should again and again exhort the young husband to live joyfully with the wife of his youth, and, forsaking all others, cleave to her alone? In this he did but copy the beautiful and poetic picture of connubial happiness which had been furnished to him by his father David, if, indeed, he was the author of that Psalm, "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house; thy children like olive-plants round about thy table."—Psalm cxxviii. 3. "The vine," says Bishop Horne, "a lowly plant, raised with tender care, becoming, by its luxuriance, its beauty, its fragrance, and its clusters, the ornament and glory of the house to which it is joined, and by which it is supported, forms the finest imaginable emblem of a fair, virtuous, and faithful wife. The olive-trees planted by the inhabitants of Eastern countries round their banqueting places in their gardens, to cheer the eye by their verdure, and to

refresh the body by their cooling shade, do no less aptly and significantly set forth the pleasure which parents feel at the sight of a numerous and flourishing offspring."

On the other hand, Solomon directs all the powers of his bitter eloquence and irony against the degraded woman, whose deadly work none has ever signalized with more holy indignation. How does he brand the crime of the harlot in the second and fifth chapters of the book of Proverbs; and with what awful correctness describe the conduct of the adulteress in the seventh. Nor does he stop here, but descends to the characters of women who, though less guilty than those to whom we have just alluded, are still deserving of severe reprobation—"*The foolish woman*, who plucketh her house down with her hands" (xiv.): "*the brawling woman*, whose society is more intolerable than dwelling in a corner of the house-top, or in the wilderness" (xxi. 9—xx. 24): "*the woman that maketh ashamed*, who is a rottenness in the bones of her husband" (xii. 4): "the *odious* woman, whose marriage is one of the four things for which the earth is disquieted, and which it can not bear" (xxx. 23): "the *fair* woman without discretion, whose beauty is like a jewel of gold in a swine's snout" (xi. 22): "the *contentious* wife, that continual dropping on a very rainy day" (xix. 13). This same Solomon, at the period when he had reached a penitent and reformed old age, and when all the events of his life had passed in review before

him, is compelled to confess that he had sought in vain for a woman after his own heart: "I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her. Behold, this have I found (saith the preacher), counting one by one, to find out the account, which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found."—Eccles. vii. 26–28. Let not this passage, however, be mistaken, as if it meant that it was Solomon's opinion that the number of good women is inferior to the number of good men. Observation and general testimony assure us that this is not the truth. We are to consider *where* he made his inquiry for female virtue, and under what circumstances it was made. He who had crowded his court with wives and concubines, could little expect to find female excellence in such a situation. Instead of concentrating his affections on one woman as his wife, the partner of his joys and sorrows, and seeking his happiness in drinking with her the sweet cup of connubial bliss, he had gathered round him in his harem, for pride and sensuality, a multitude of women, amid whose jealousies and contentions he could no more find happiness than he could virtue amid their illicit pleasures. From such a scene virtue would retire abashed and weeping. If, therefore, in this passage, he satirized the sex, he did it on unjust, unwise, and unmanly

grounds. "But," says Dr. Wardlaw, "I am far from thinking that he here speaks the language of a disappointed and waspish satirist. He rather utters the feelings of an abased and self-dissatisfied penitent, of one who had felt it to be 'an evil and a bitter thing,' to depart as he had done from God, who remembered 'the wormwood and the gall;' who perceived and lamented the folly and the wickedness of all those 'inventions,' by which himself and others had sought to find out happiness apart from the favor and the ways of God."

If we speak of woman as a MOTHER, how often does that endearing relationship come upon us in holy Scripture: both literally and metaphorically, both in the Old Testament and in the New, both in the way of example and of precept. The maternal relationship is the theme of constant reference, both for the sake of illustrating other subjects, and for enforcing its own claims as those of the female head of the household. Had this character been omitted, or only introduced occasionally, and then invested with no more than a second-rate importance, the Bible would have been wanting in one of its sweetest harmonies with the feelings of nature, one of its strongest appeals to the sympathies of humanity: and we should have doubted if it had come from Him who created woman and gave her as a helpmeet for man. The paternal character and relation are maintained in their primary rank, and authority, and dignity; no invasion is made upon the prerogative, or usurpation of the rights of the father

—he is not called to yield his place of rule, nis su premacy of condition, to the *mother;* and yet how is all her proper rank, and station, and influence maintained. There she is exhibited as being in the family circle, if not the circumference which includes all, yet in one sense as the center, in which husband, children, and servants, all meet. How resonant are the Scriptures with that sweet and tender vocable—how redolent with the fragrance of that odoriferous word—how rich with the ornament of that beautiful term—A MOTHER. There is sustained the poet's declaration—

> "A mother is a mother still:
> The holiest thing alive."

If the mother's importance be not known—the mother's claims not conceded—her influence not felt—her duties not rightly discharged—it is not the fault of the Bible, which is the friend of society by exalting the relationship of a mother. Nor is the MISTRESS overlooked or forgotten, nor her duties left out of consideration.

The WIDOW—that name for desolation—that sorrowful epithet—that type of woe, meets us at every turn. She passes before us in her weeds and in her tears, leading in her hand her fatherless children, and saying to us, "Pity me, pity me, O my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me!" More is said about, and for, and to, this bereaved one, than to any other class of women: a circumstance which exhibits with uncommon force and beauty the compassion

of God. But there is a discrimination on this subject which shows the *wisdom* as well as tenderness of God. Young and vivacious widows are admonished, while aged and helpless ones are comforted. —1 Tim. v.

Nor is the FEMALE SERVANT left out. A place for her is found among the various other and higher ranks and conditions of her sex. Her humble lot is recognized amid the provisions and commands of the law, and was announced and defended by the thunders of Mount Sinai. We find it protected by precept and illustrated by example, as if woman in her lowest grade of society should not be overlooked in the Bible—that blessed and glorious charter of rights and privileges. There the *little maid* lifts up her head among the queens and the peeresses of Scripture history.

THIRDLY. But the most impressive and important point of view in which this subject can be placed, and the most convincing proof of the bearing of Scripture on woman's sex, is the very great number and variety of female EXAMPLES in the Word of God. It is one of the surpassing excellences of the Bible, that it is replete with narrative, history, and biography. And thus, apart from its sacred character and its momentous importance, it is one of the most entertaining books in the world. It is full, not only of precept, but of living, acting patterns of the virtues it inculcates and of the vices which it prohibits. It is a complete picture gallery, in surveying which we see portraits of every

size, from the miniature to the full-length painting, and in every degree of representation, from the mere outline to the most finished production of the artist's pencil. Among these it would have been strange if female characters had been wanting. They are not wanting. There, amid kings, priests, warriors, and prophets, are to be seen, profusely intermingled, the portraits of "the holy women of the old time, who trusted in God," as well as of those who had disgraced themselves and dishonored their sex. In the great drama of life, as it passes before us in the Bible, no mean or inconsiderable part is assigned to female character. Her place among the *dramatis personæ* is not that of some airy vision which lights upon our path, and which, after surprising and dazzling us for a moment, straightway vanishes and is seen no more, but of one of the veritable actors in almost every place and every scene.

The sacred volume opens, as we have already seen, with Eve in Paradise, all beauty, innocence, and smiles, as its lovely frontispiece; and then shows us that same Eve, impelled by the vanity which she has bequeathed as a mournful legacy to her daughters, reaching forth her hand at the instigation of the tempter, to pluck that fruit which was the test of her obedience, and the hinge of our destiny, and thus exhibiting to us the sad association of beauty with sin. In tracing woman's history from Paradise as the starting-point, as it is set forth on the page of Scripture, we will look first at

the darker side of the narrative. How soon do we see Adah and Zillah, women of the antediluvian world, consenting to be the joint wives of Lamech and thus giving, for aught we can tell, the original pattern of that bane of domestic happiness—polygamy.—Gen. iv. 19–24. Then come "the daughters of men"—the women in the line of Cain, who made no profession of religion, but lived in atheism—seducing and corrupting "the sons of God"—the female line of Seth and the professors of godliness—and thus preparing the way by these unsuitable and incongruous marriages, and the universal corruption that followed, for the waters of the deluge to wash away the moral filth of the old world.—Gen. vi. 1–7. Hagar comes next, troubling the faith, charity, and peace of Abraham for a time, persecuting the child of promise, and at the same time correcting by her waywardness the weakness of the patriarch, whose concubine she was. Then that family of Lot—the poor, earthly-minded mother, that was so wedded to Sodom as to cast the lingering, longing look behind, which transformed her into a pillar of salt; and the disgusting conduct of her incestuous daughters, who showed too well how they had been corrupted by the place of their abode, and how careful all parents should be to remove their children from the polluting influence of evil examples.—Gen. xix. What a revolting pattern of an adulterous woman, and to hide her shame, of a cruel slanderer, is Potiphar's wife!—Gen. xxxix. Then there was the

ensnaring and successful temptation offered by the daughters of Moab to the children of Israel in the wilderness.—Numbers xxvi. How mighty and how fatal were the powers of harlotry in Delilah, to subdue the strength and extort the secrets of Sampson; and what a forcible picture of man's weakness before woman's vicious wiles has it furnished to all coming ages! Who does not think of Bathsheba consenting to David's wicked proposals, and thus causing him for a while to cease to be David? And then the strange women that threw even the mighty intellect of Solomon into the awful eclipse of idolatry! Jezebel, that Zidonian idolatress, who instigated her husband to the murder of Naboth, and exasperated the mind of Ahab to a more intense degree of wickedness than he would otherwise have attained to.—1 Kings xxi. And Athaliah, that turbulent and idolatrous queen-mother, who counseled her son to do wickedly, and was assassinated by command of Jehoiada, the priest.*—2 Chron. xxii.

* I have forborne, of course, to *dwell* on the examples and descriptions of female delinquency recorded in the Scriptures. Such instances are intended to be read alone, rather than exhibited in the pulpit. It has been a matter of surprise to some, perhaps almost of regret, that such instances of depravity should have been left on record. But shall we dispute in this matter either the wisdom, goodness, or purity of God? Are not important ends to be answered in the moral government of God, and in the religious history of man? A profligate woman is at once the most odious, mischievous, and hateful member of the community. Is it

Coming forward to the New Testament, we meet with Herodias, exhibiting the malignant and re-

not every way proper, and even desirable, that such a character should be held up to detestation and scorn, as a warning to her sex, and that God should thus set a brand upon her with his own hand, and bear his indignant testimony against her vices? The examples of this kind are all for warning, to show in a concrete form the excessive odiousness of female depravity. This is done in a manner the least likely to do harm, and the most likely to do good. The descriptions of female turpitude in the Word of God contain nothing to inflame the imagination or to stimulate the passions; nothing to make vice seductive by a half-concealment of its odiousness; nothing to beat down the guards of virtue, by interesting or amiable associations of character with sin, or by sophistical and insidious excuses or defenses. The vice is left in all its naked and revolting deformity—all its nauseating loathsomeness—to inspire disgust, and cause even those of ordinary virtue to recoil from the ugly and filthy object. How different the case with many works of fiction, both prosaic and poetic, in which, though there may be a less particularity of sinful detail, there is immeasurably more to corrupt the moral principles, to pollute the heart, and to lead astray the youthful mind from the paths of virtue. What female reader of the Word of God can rise from the exercise of contemplating even the worst characters, and perusing the most vivid descriptions of the sins of her sex, without a stronger love of purity and a more deeply rooted hatred of iniquity. This is the answer we would give to infidels, who sometimes affect to be prudish, and complain of the descriptions and examples of female turpitude which are contained in the sacred volume. The use which every virtuous woman will make of them is to be inspired with a greater abhorrence of transgression, and a more holy and intense desire to be kept from the most distant approach to it

vengeful passions of a shameless woman, against the servant of God, who had dared to reprove her paramour, and impelling Herod, against the protest of his judgment, heart, and conscience, to put John the Baptist to death, and thus involve them both in murder.—Matt. xiv. 11. And here also we read of the Jewish women that encouraged and stimulated to violence the mob that persecuted Paul and Barnabas.—Acts xiii. 50, 51; and "That woman Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess, and taught and seduced God's servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols."—Rev. ii. 20.

In such instances as these, female pride, wherever it exists, may find some check to its exercise, and some motives for humiliation. To those who are prone to think of their sex more highly than they ought, we present these examples of female frailty, which the pen of inspiration has drawn upon the page of Scripture. While to those of the other sex, if there are any, who are apt to glory over their fallen sisters, we would, after reminding them that some of these instances are the result of their own seductions, present the brighter side of the picture, and would also call upon woman to contemplate the beautiful specimens of female excellence with which the firmament of Scripture is studded, like so many stars of various magnitudes

There is Sarah, who, notwithstanding her many failings, was unquestionably a good and even a great woman. In her case, as in many others, her

beauty had become her snare, and if not dangerous to her own virtue, had placed the life of her husband in peril. She is presented by the apostle Peter as one of the holy women of old, who were patterns of domestic virtue and piety. Her defects, which consisted of a weakness of faith, that led to some strange domestic arrangements that brought their own punishment, were still surrounded with the brightness of many excellences, in which, if they were not entirely lost, they were at any rate diminished. She was a pattern of conjugal fidelity and sweet simplicity, and just matronly jealousy toward the stranger who had been brought for a while so unwisely into her place. Her faith in God's promise was strong, though shaken for a moment by the improbabilities of the promised blessing.—Gen. xii.; xxiii.

Rebekah's earlier and latter life presents to us a somewhat painful contrast. None can read the beautiful account of the mission of Abraham's servant to her father, without admiration at the good qualities of the damsel who is the heroine of the story—her industrious and domesticated habits—her unaffected and artless simplicity—her genuine, yet not silly modesty—her graceful courtesy—her humane consideration of the comfort of the brute creation. What a bright pattern is here for the imitation of young people! But, oh! her unbelieving, injudicious, and sinful contrivances to bring about the bestowment of the Divine blessing upon the heir of promise, by that wicked imposition prac

ticed upon her aged and blind husband. Mothers, read it, and learn to guard against sinful contrivances to get good for your children. However, Rebekah was a good, though a mistaken woman.—Gen. xxiv.; xxvii.

In Miriam, the watchful sentinel of the ark upon the waters of the Nile which contained the infant Moses, we see first the dutiful daughter and anxious sister, and, in after life, the coadjutor of her illustrious brother, leading the chorus of women by her timbrel and her voice, in the triumphal song of Moses, on the borders of the Red Sea: Exod. ii. xv.; afterward, in conjunction with Aaron, his opponent through envy; but we may hope restored to her better and earlier mind, through the chastisement she received from the Lord.—Numbers xii. How much mischief may envy do to spoil the best of characters, and to poison the happiness of families.

In Deborah, we contemplate the religious heroine, and the inspired poetess, raised up by the special Providence of God, for the deliverance of his people; an instance of exalted piety in an age of depressed religion, and still deeper national distress.—Judges iv.

Should it be asked by any one, what we are to say of Jael, celebrated by the poetess Deborah, in her lofty strain of praise, I scarcely know what answer to give. Nothing less than a Divine mandate, which she may have received in some unknown and unrecorded manner, could have justified the

deed. Apart from this, even the stratagems of war would not clear the heroine from the charge of treachery of the blackest kind. True, Sisera was an enemy, but he had trusted himself to her protection, and she slew him while sleeping under her guardianship. I leave the matter therefore as I find it, without either justifying or condemning, for I know not all the facts of the case.

What a pattern of filial obedience, piety, and patriotism, have we in Jephthah's daughter, over whose affecting story hangs so deep a mystery! Whether, according to the opinions of some, she was actually offered up in sacrifice, or, according to others, only consecrated by perpetual virginity to God, her own beautiful character shines out with equal brightness, in all that is amiable, dutiful, and submissive.

But now turn to that touching and melancholy group of widows in the land of Moab—Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah. What pen but that which has done it, and done it with such inimitable simplicity, could do justice to that sweet and pathetic story. Rarely in the history of families does such a scene of affliction as this occur—a widowed mother, and the widows of her two sons! A sad proof how precarious are all the scenes of dear domestic bliss we fondly call our own. How tender, how dignified, and how thoughtful is the conduct of Naomi. What nobleness of resolution, what daughter-like attachment, and what piety do we see in Ruth; and if in her after-conduct there was that which

would not suit the meridian of our age and country there was nothing contrary to the strictest purity of intention, or modesty of conduct, if we take into account the circumstances of her time, and the provisions of the Jewish law under which she then lived. The whole narrative presents a beautiful episode in Jewish history, and an attractive specimen of the simplicity of early manners.

Can we fail to sympathize with Hannah in her sorrows, her insults, and her joys, or to admire her zeal for the Lord, in devoting her child of promise to his service?—1 Samuel i. What a pattern for parents, in being willing to give up their sons for ministers and missionaries! Abigail furnishes us with a striking example of the singular prudence of a woman who was unhappily associated with a drunkard and a churl, and of her diligence and her tact in averting from her family the evils impending over it from her husband's vices.—1 Samuel xxv. 1–3.

What an instance of respect, gratitude, and affection, for the ministers of religion—of female influence, rightly exerted over the mind of her husband in the cause of religion—and of submission to the will of God, is the Shunamite.—2 Kings iv. Who can read that touching account of the death of her only son, and her own collected, composed, and energetic conduct on the occasion, without deep feeling and high admiration? We find no overwhelming or distracting grief, which prevented her from adopting the best, the only means for obtain

ing relief, but a faith which sustained her courage, and directed all her actions. Multitudes in every age and country where the story has gone, have been instructed by her language, and stimulated by her example; and amid the deepest sorrows, have echoed her few noble monosyllables in reply to the question, "Is it well with thee? With thy husband? With thy child? And she answered and said, 'IT IS WELL.'"

And then what a pattern of fidelity, and piety, and kindness, do we find for female servants in the very next chapter to this, in that simple and beautiful story of the little Hebrew captive girl, who was nurse-maid in Naaman's family. All, and especially they who occupy a similar situation, may learn, by what weak and humble instruments God may accomplish the purposes of his mind, and work out the schemes of his providence. To how many a charity sermon in these remote days, has that incident furnished a text; and thus the little Jewish slave not only brought healing to her master, and a knowledge of the true God into Syria, but became a pattern to myriads of children in our own country.

Nor less to be admired, are the generosity and faith of the widow of Sarepta, whose barrel of meal and cruse of oil stand out in such relief, as among the brightest pictures of Old Testament history. In what a coruscation of glory does the name of Esther blaze forth upon us, for conjugal fidelity, piety uncorrupted by prosperity, and queenly in-

fluence consecrated to the cause of true religion!

Now open the page of the New Testament. Is Christianity destitute of female worthies—women of holy renown? It would be very strange if it were. Strange, indeed, if *his* religion, who, though he was the Son of God, was born of woman, did not raise up many who should shine forth in all the mild and heavenly radiance of female piety.

Though, as I have said in the last sermon, we ascribe no Divine honors, and offer no idolatrous homage to the Virgin Mary, nor set her forth in the beauties of painting and sculpture; nor call her, with a singular mixture of absurdity and blasphemy, the MOTHER OF GOD—we revere her as blessed and exalted among women, to give birth to the humanity of Christ, the Saviour of the world; and ascribe to her every holy and general excellence as a woman, a wife, a mother, and a saint.* We cher-

* In an age when Popery is lifting up its head in triumph and with hope, no fair opportunity should be lost to expose its pretensions and refute its errors. There is no part of this dreadful system more contrary to Scripture, or more insulting to God, than its Mariolatry, or worship of the Virgin Mary. She is styled "Mother of God;" "Queen of Seraphim, Saints, and Prophets;" "Advocate of Sinners;" "Refuge of Sinners;" "Gate of Heaven;" "Queen of Heaven." And as the same titles are ascribed to her, or nearly so, as are ascribed to Christ; so is the same worship paid to her as to the Saviour. Churches are built to her honor; her shrines are crowded with devotees, enriched with their gifts, and adorned with their votive offerings. Prayers are offered to her—her praises are chanted

ish also a high veneration for Elizabeth her cousin, the wife of Zacharias, and the mother of John the Baptist.—Luke i. In the piety of old Anna—Luke ii. 36—we see a bright pattern for aged widows in her believing, waiting posture, for the consolation of Israel, and an example for an aged saint, ready for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: the zeal,

in hymns, and blessings are offered to and asked from her as one who has power to bestow them. Five annual festivals celebrate her greatness, and keep alive the devotions of her worshipers So that Papists almost jostle out the devotion due to Almighty God and our blessed Saviour by their idolatry of her. Now, where, we ask, is one single example, command, or even hint, for all this in the Word of God? Is it any wonder the Scriptures are kept from the people, when the most common understanding could see that nothing of all this is to be found in that volume? The Acts of the Apostles make mention of her name but once, and that without any mark of eulogy; and in the Epistles she is not mentioned at all. Yea, how *contrary* is all this to the declaration that there is only one Mediator between God and Man—the Man Christ Jesus. "This doctrine of the worship due to the Virgin," says Wylie, in his admirable work on the Papacy, "has been exhibited in symbol, and that in so grotesque a way, that for a moment we forget its blasphemy. In the dream of St. Bernard—which forms the subject of an altar-piece at Milan—two ladders were seen reaching from earth to heaven. At the top of one of the ladders stood Christ, and at the top of the other stood Mary. Of those who attempted to enter heaven by the ladder of Christ, not one succeeded—all fell back. Of those who ascended by the ladder of Mary, not one failed The virgin, prompt to succor, stretched out her hand, and thus aided, the aspirants ascended with ease."—SEYMOUR'S *Mornings among the Jesuits.*

so worthy to be imitated by every reclaimed sinner, of the woman of Samaria, after she had believed in Christ, for his honor and the conversion of her countrymen—John iv.: the melting penitence of the woman who had been a sinner, whose history teaches us that the most abandoned persons may be reclaimed, and find mercy, and that penitence, gratitude, and love must be in proportion to the guilt contracted and forgiven—Luke vii. 36–50: the strong and invincible faith of the Syrophenician woman which received such a tribute of admiration from Christ, and whose narrative will teach the latest generations of mankind the power of importunate, persevering, and believing prayer—Matt. xv. 23: the generosity of the poor widow who cast in her mites, the whole of her substance, into the treasury of the temple—Mark xii. 42: the beautiful account of the two sisters, Martha and Mary, and the discrimination of the characters of the careful and troubled housewife, and the anxious inquirer after salvation—Luke x. 38–42: the pouring out of the box of spikenard by one that loved Christ so as to give her costliest offerings to his person—John xii. 3: the grateful, devoted attention, and ministrations of Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to Christ—John xix. 25; xx. 1: what an array of female excellence is here!

Passing on to the Acts of the Apostles, what delightful mention is made of Dorcas, full of good works and alms deeds which she did, as evinced by her coats and garments for the poor, and the tears which

were produced by her death, and which embalmed her memory—Acts ix. 36–41: and of Lydia, who resorted to the place of prayer at Philippi, whose heart the Lord had opened to attend to the things spoken by Paul, and who afforded the rights of hospitality to the apostle and his companion—Acts xvi.: and of the chief women, not a few, at Thessalonica, who believed in the apostle's doctrine concerning Christ—Acts xvii. 4. Nor are the Epistles barren of female names deserving ever to be held in remembrance for their piety, zeal, and good works. There we find Phebe, the deaconness and bearer to Rome of the epistle to the church in that city—Rom. xvi. 1: and Euodia, and Syntyche; Lois and Eunice, the mother and grandmother of Timothy, renowned for the unfeigned faith which dwelt in them—2 Tim. i. 5: and those women also that labored with Paul in the gospel—Phil. iv. 2. And what shall we say more of Priscilla, Paul's helper in Christ, and the instructress of the eloquent Apollos; and Mary, "who bestowed much labor upon him;" and Tryphena, and Tryphona, and Julia, "who labored in the Lord?"—Rom. xvi.

No, my female friends, you see, we repeat, the Scriptures of truth have not passed over your sex in silence, nor thrust it into a corner, nor thrown it into a shadow. On the contrary, the sacred page is rich and luminous, with bright and beautiful examples of female excellence. You stand there, side by side, with man in the practice of piety, and are exhibited as not a whit behind him in all that apper

tains to the glory of humanity. In the Bible, we have now proved that woman is seen in every gradation of rank, from the queen upon the throne to the menial grinding at the mill; in every variety of condition—the maid, the wife, the mother, and the mistress; in every circumstance of grief and joy—the happy bride, the mourning widow; in every phase of moral character—the faithful spouse, and the shameless adulteress; in every scene of active duty, whether in the family, the church, or the world; in every changeful aspect of fortune—rolling in affluence, or pining in want; there she is seen enlivening the sacred page with her narrative—adorning it with her beauty; sometimes darkening it with her crimes, at others, brightening it with her virtues; now calling us to weep with her in her sorrows, then to rejoice with her in her joys. In short, woman is everywhere to be found wrought into the details of God's Scriptures, a beacon to warn us, or a rule to guide us. And, as written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it is to be considered as his testimony to the excellence and importance of your sex, and the influence it is intended and destined to exert upon the welfare of mankind. Had the Bible—I will not say been *against* you—but had it *passed you over* in silence, or only referred to you incidentally, or looked at you with sidelong glances, you would have sunk in general estimation; and man's neglect of you would have been defended or excused by that of God himself. But now, no one can plead the example of

the Bible for any attempt to neglect, despise, or oppress you. While it protects woman from the insults, the injuries, and the oppression of the other sex, it protects her with no less care and benefit from the sad effects which would arise from an assumption of prerogatives which do not belong to her, and from those excuses of ambition to which her own vanity might otherwise prompt her. It guards her dignity from being trampled down by others, and equally prevents her from lowering it herself, by pretensions which would only make her ridiculous. It describes, with accuracy, the circle within which it is the will of Providence she should move; presents to her the mission which she is sent into the world to fulfill; furnishes her the rules by which she is to act; proposes to her the rewards which she may legitimately seek and surely expect, if she be faithful to herself; and offers her the assistance necessary for the fulfillment of her high and holy vocation. What this is, will be the subject of our next sermon.

In the meanwhile, let me exhort you not only to study the Scriptures, but to study them—next to your desire to learn the way of salvation through faith in Christ Jesus—to form your own character as women, by its precepts and its examples. Many and precious are the volumes that have been written for your benefit by your own sex. Female pens have been most happily and usefully employed in delineating female excellence; the productions of which you would do well to read. But

after all, there is no guide for the formation of female character, morally or religiously considered, like the inspired one. A woman unacquainted with the Bible, and ignorant of its contents, as affecting her own conduct, character, and history, has yet to know the finest patterns of female loveliness. The Bible is the best mirror by which most accurately to know what you are, and to become what you should be; before whose reflecting sur face you may adjust all the moral habiliments of the soul, and from which you may go forth adorned with all the beauties of holiness, clothed with the garment of purity, and decorated with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.*

* The author is indebted for some things in this sermon and the next to an incomparably beautiful little work by Adolphe Monod, formerly Professor of Theology at Montauban, but now Minister of the French Reformed Church in Paris. A preacher so celebrated, that when Lacordaire, the most renowned of Roman Catholic public orators, was complimented upon being the first French preacher in France, he replied, "No: I am only the second—Adolphe Monod is first." A very elegant little work has lately been published by the Rev. John Jessop, M.A., entitled, "Woman," for which the author candidly acknowledges himself indebted chiefly to "a *late* highly esteemed French Protestant clergyman." Mr. J. does not seem to be aware that happily Mr. Monod is still living. His exquisitely beautiful little work has been admirably translated by Miss Lloyd; and is of such excellence, that it can not be spoken of in terms of eulogy which are too high and emphatic.

Woman's Mission.

"And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet for him."—GENESIS ii. 18

"WHAT, in this great, and diversified, and busy world, is MY place, and MY business?" is a question which every one should ask. For every one *has* a place to fill and a part to act. And to act his part well, according to the will of God, in the lofty drama of human life, should be the ambition, the solicitude, and the prayer of each of us. It is the first lesson of wisdom, to know our place; the second, to keep it. And of course, corresponding with this, to ascertain the duties of our place, and to discharge them. There are *class* duties as well as individual ones, and the latter are generally to be more accurately learned by an intelligent apprehension of the former. Woman, as such, has *her* mission. What is it? What is precisely that rank she is to occupy—that purpose she is to fulfill, above which she would be unduly exalted, and below which she would be as unjustly degraded? This is a subject which should be thoroughly understood, in order that *she* should know what to claim, and man what to concede—that she may

know what she has to do, and he what he has a right to expect.

We shall endeavor to answer this question, and point out the nature of woman's mission. In doing this, we shall consult the infallible oracle of Scripture, and not the speculations of moralists, economists, and philosophers. We hold *this* to be our rule in the matter before us. God is the creator of both sexes—the constructor of society—the author of social relations, and the arbiter of social duties, claims, and immunities. And this is admitted by all who believe in the authority of the Bible. You are content, my female friends, to abide by the decisions of this oracle. You have every reason to be so. He that created you is best qualified to declare the intention of his own acts, and you may safely, as you should humbly, allow him to fix your position, and make known your duties. In common with man, woman has a heavenly calling to glorify God as the end of her existence; to perform all the duties, and enjoy all the blessings, of a religious life; like him, she is a sinful, rational, and immortal creature, placed under an economy of mercy, and called, by repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, to eternal life. Religion is as much her vocation as that of the other sex. In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female, but all are on a level as to obligations, duties, and privileges.

In common with man, she is called, where she is unmarried and dependent, to labor for her own sup-

port; a condition to which large portions of the community are necessarily subject by the circumstances of their birth. Industry is as incumbent upon her as upon the other sex, and indolence is no more excusable. But in the married state, her sphere of labor, as we shall presently show, is the family; and it belongs to the husband to earn by the sweat of his brow, not only his own bread, but that of the household. In many of the uncivilized tribes, where the ameliorating condition of Christianity is not felt, the woman is the drudge of the family, while the husband lives in lordly sloth. And even in this country, at least in its manufacturing portions, manual labor falls too often, and too heavily, upon married women, greatly to the detriment of their families. An unmarried woman, however, without fortune, must provide for herself in some way or other, according to the circumstances of her birth and situation; and let her not consider herself degraded by it. Honest industry is far more honorable than pride and sloth.

But neither of these is the *peculiar* mission of woman, as appertaining to her sex. To know what this is, we must, as I have said, consult the page of revelation, and ascertain the declared motive of God for her creation. "And the Lord God said, *It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him* AN HELPMEET FOR HIM." This is further expressed, or rather repeated, where it is said, "And Adam," or, "*Although* Adam, had given names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and

to every beast of the field; yet for Adam there was not found AN HELPMEET FOR HIM"—Genesis ii. 18, 20. Nothing can be more clear from hence, than that woman was made for man. Adam was created a being with undeveloped social propensities, which, indeed, seem essential to *all creatures.* It is the sublime peculiarity of Deity to be entirely independent for happiness of all other beings. He, and he only, is the theater of his own glory, the fountain of his own felicity, a sufficient object of his own contemplation, and needing nothing for his bliss but self-communion. The highest archangel in heaven would pine, even there, for companionship, either divine or angelic. Adam, surrounded with all the glories of Paradise, and with all the various tribes it contained, found himself alone, and needed companionship, without which his life was but a solitude, Eden itself a desert. Endowed with a nature too communicative to be satisfied with himself alone, he sighed for society, for support, for some complement to his existence, and only half-lived so long as he lived alone. Formed to think, to speak, to love, his thoughts yearned for other thoughts with which to compare and exercise his soaring aspirations. His words were wearisomely wasted upon the wanton air, or at best awoke but an echo which mocked instead of answered him. His love, as regards an earthly object, knew not where to bestow itself; and returning to his own bosom, threatened to degenerate into a desolating egotism. His entire being longed, in short,

for another self—but that other self did not exist: there was no helpmeet for him. The visible creatures which surrounded him, were too much beneath him: the invisible Being who gave him life, was too much above him, to permit him to unite their condition with his own. Whereupon God made the woman, and the great problem was immediately solved.

It was, then, the characteristic of *un*fallen man to want some one to sympathize with him in his joys, as it is of fallen man to want some one to sympathize with him in his sorrows. Whether Adam was so far conscious of his wants as to ask for a companion, we are not informed. It would appear from the inspired record, as if the design of this precious boon originated with God; and as if Eve, like so many of his other mercies, was the spontaneous bestowment of his own free-will. Thus Adam would have to say, as did one of his most illustrious descendants many ages afterward, "Thou preventest" (anticipatest) "me with thy goodness." Here, then, is the design of God in creating woman, to be a suitable helpmate to man. Man needed a companion, and God gave him woman. And as there was no other man than Adam at the time in existence, Eve was designed exclusively for Adam's comfort; thus, teaching us from the beginning, that whatever mission woman may have to accomplish in reference to man, in a generic sense, her mission, at least in wedded life, is to be a suitable helpmate for that *one* man to whom she is united. It was declared from the beginning, that every other

all time. The preceding language has placed her, as a punishment for her sin, in a state of *sorrow;* this places her in a state of *subjection.* Her husband was to be the center of her earthly desires, and, to a certain extent, the regulator of them also; and she was to be in subjection to him. What was enacted in paradise has been confirmed by every subsequent dispensation of grace. Judaism is full of it in all its provisions; and Christianity equally establishes it.

I shall here introduce and explain the words of the apostle, "I would have you to know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man." He then goes on to direct that women should not appear and exercise those miraculous gifts which were sometimes bestowed upon them, unvailed and with their hair cut off. He adds, "A man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man"—1 Cor. xi. 3–9. For the explanation of this passage, I remark, that in the times of the apostle there were two recognized characteristic emblems of the female sex, when they appeared in public—vails, and the preservation of their tresses. It would seem from the apostle's remarks, as if some of the female members of the Corinthian Church, during the time that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was

upon them, cast off their vails, after the manner of the heathen priestesses when they delivered the responses of the oracles. This conduct the apostle reproves, and informs them that if the vail were thrown aside they might as well also cut off their flowing hair, which is one of woman's distinctions from man, and by all nations considered the ornament as well as the peculiarity of the sex. We may pause for a moment to observe how constantly and completely Christianity is the parent of order and the enemy of indecorum of every kind. But why were not the women to lay aside their vails? Because it would be forgetting their subordination and dependence, and assuming an equal rank with man. This is the gist of the apostle's reason. It was not merely indecorous and contrary to modesty, but it was ambitious, and violating the order of heaven. The other expressions of the apostle in this passage are very strong. As Christ is the head or ruler of man, so man is the head and ruler of woman in the domestic economy. Man was made to show forth God's glory and praise; to be in subordination to him, and *only* to him; while woman was created to be, in addition to this, the glory of man, by being in subordination to him, as his help, his ornament, and his glory. She was not only made *out* of him, but *for* him. All her loveliness, comeliness, and purity are not only the expressions of her excellence, but of his honor and dignity, since all were not only derived from him but made for him.

Here, then, is woman's true position, and if any thing more need be said to prove it from the records of Christianity, we may refer to other apostolic language, in which wives are enjoined to be subject to their husbands in all things, even as the church is subject to Christ—Ephes. v. Nor is the apostle Paul alone in this, for Peter writes in the same strain—1 Epistle iii. 1. Let woman then bow to this authority, nor feel herself degraded by such submission. It has been said that in domestic life man shines as the sun, but woman as the moon, with a splendor borrowed from the man. May it not be said with greater truth and propriety, and to render the comparison less invidious, man shines as the primary planet, reflecting the glory of God, who is the orb of the moral universe; and woman shines as the satellite of man, deriving her splendor from the same source, and while equally obeying the law of the central luminary, is created for the primary dependent body, revolves in its attraction, follows in its course, and ministers to its comfort.

Behold, then, we say again, woman's position and mission; it is summed up in two words—HUMILITY and LOVE. Of love and subjection to her husband. Every thing connected with the relation ship of man and woman has, however, since the fall, a more serious character; her love has become more anxious; her humility more profound. Bash ful of her own defects, and anxious to reinstate nerself in her husband's heart, woman lives to re pair the wrong she has inflicted on man, and lav

ishes upon him consolations which may sweeten the present bitterness of sin, and warnings which may preserve from the future bitterness of hell.

Woman, then, whatever relation she may bear to society at large, whatever duties, in consequence of this relation, she may have to discharge, and whatever benefits, by the right discharge of these duties, she may have it in her power to confer upon the community, must consider herself as called to advance the comfort of man in his private relations, by promoting his peace to promote her own, and to receive from him all that respect, protection, and ever assiduous affection to which her equal nature, her companionship, and her devotedness give her so just a claim. She is, in wedded life, to be his constant companion, in whose society he is to find one who meets him hand to hand, eye to eye, lip to lip, and heart to heart; to whom he can unburthen the secrets of a heart pressed down with care, or wrung with anguish; whose presence shall be to him instead of all society; whose voice shall be his sweetest music; and her smiles his brightest sunshine. From whom he goes forth with regret, and to whose converse he returns with willing feet when the toils of the day are over; who walks near his loving heart, and feels the throbbing of affection as her arm leans on his, and presses on his side. In his hours of retired converse he tells her all the secrets of his heart; finds in her all the capabilities and all the promptings of the most tender and endeared felowship; and in her gentle

smiles, and honied words, and unrestrained speech, enjoys all he expected in one who was given to be his associate and friend.

In that companionship which woman was designed to afford to man, must of course be included the sympathetic offices of the comforter. It is hers in their hours of retirement to console and cheer him; when he is injured or insulted, to mollify the wounds of his troubled spirit; when burdened by care, to lighten, by sharing the load; when groaning with anguish, to calm by her peace-speaking words the tumult of his heart; and act, through all his sorrows, the part of a ministering angel.

Nor will she be backward to offer, nor he backward to receive the counsels of wisdom which her prudence will suggest, even though she may not be supposed to be intimately acquainted with all the entanglements of this world's business. Woman's advice, had it been asked and acted upon, would have saved thousands of men from bankruptcy and ruin. Few men have ever had to regret their taking counsel from a prudent wife; while multitudes have had to reproach themselves for their folly in not asking, and multitudes more for not following the counsels of such a companion.

If, then, this is woman's mission, according to the representation of her Almighty Creator—to be the suitable helpmate of that man to whom she has given up herself to be the companion of his pilgrimage upon earth—it of course supposes that marriage, contracted with a due regard to prudence,

and under all proper regulations, is the natural state of both man and woman. And so, we affirm in truth, it is. Providence has willed it, and nature prompts it. But as the exceptions are so numerous, is there no mission for those to whom the exception appertains? Is it married women only that have a mission, and an important one? Certainly not. In these cases we fall back upon woman's mission to society at large. And is not *this* momentous? Has it not been admitted in all ages, and by all countries, that the influence of female character upon social virtue and happiness, and upon national strength and prosperity, whether for good or for evil, is prodigious? Is not the declaration with which Adolphe Monod opens his beautiful treatise perfectly true? "The greatest influence on earth, whether for good or for evil, is possessed by woman. Let us study the history of by-gone ages—the state of barbarism and civilization; of the East and the West; of Paganism and Christianity; of antiquity and the middle ages; of the mediæval and modern times—and we shall find that there is nothing which more decidedly separates them than the condition of woman." Every woman, whether rich or poor, married or single, has a circle of influence, within which, according to her character, she is exerting a certain amount of power for good or harm. Every woman, by her virtue or her vice, by her folly or her wisdom, by her levity or her dignity, is adding something to our national elevation or degradation. As long as

female virtue is prevalent, upheld by one sex and respected by the other, a nation can not sink very low in the scale of ignominy by plunging into the depths of vice. To a certain extent, woman is the conservator of a nation's welfare. Her virtue, if firm and uncorrupted, will stand sentinel over that of empire. Law, and justice, and liberty, and the arts, all contribute, of course, to the well-being of a nation; beneficial influence flows in from various springs; and innumerable contributors may be at work, each laboring in his vocation for his country's weal, but let the general tone of female morals be low, and all will be rendered nugatory. While the universal prevalence of womanly intelligence and virtue will swell the stream of civilization to its highest level, impregnate it with its richest qualities, and spread its fertility over the widest surface. A community is not likely to be overthrown where woman fulfills her mission; or by the power of her noble heart over the hearts of others, she will raise it from its ruins, and restore it again to prosperity and joy. Here, then, beyond the circle of wedded life, as well as that which is found within it, is, no doubt, a part of woman's mission, and an important one it is. Her field is social life; her object is social happiness; her reward is social gratitude and respect.

If we are right as to the *nature* of woman's mission, we can not err as to the proper *sphere* of it. If she was created for man; and not only for the *race* of man, but for *one* man, then the easy and

necessary inference is, that HOME is the proper scene of woman's action and influence. There are few terms in the language around which cluster so many blissful associations as that delight of every English heart, the word HOME. The elysium of love, the nursery of virtue, the garden of enjoyment, the temple of concord, the circle of all tender relationships, the play-ground of childhood, the dwelling of manhood, the retreat of age; where health loves to enjoy its pleasures; wealth to revel in its luxuries; poverty to bear its rigors; sickness to endure its pains; and dissolving nature to expire; which throws its spell over those who are within its charmed circle, and even sends its attractions across oceans and continents, drawing to itself the thoughts and wishes of the man that wanders from it at the antipodes: this—*home—sweet home*—is the sphere of wedded woman's mission. Was it not so at first, when PARADISE was woman's home? True, there was no other scene for her to appear and act in; but this seemed to teach us at once what was to be her first and chief circle of movement forever after. Is it any hardship upon woman—any depreciation of her importance, to place her *there*, as her sphere of action and influence? Is it to assign her a circle of influence unworthy of, or beneath herself, to call her to preside over that little community, of which *home* is the seat? Sha l we estimate the importance of such a scene of action? Shall we tell of the varied and momentous interests which are included in that circle? Shall we speak

of the happiness of a husband, whose bliss, to so considerable an extent, is created by herself, and involves her own? Or the character and future well-being, for both worlds, of a family, if there be one? Or the comfort of servants, and the order and pleasant working of the whole domestic constitution, all of which depends so much upon her? Why, to make one such home a seat of holiness and happiness; to fill one such sphere with an influence so sweet and sacred; to throw the fascination of connubial feeling and of maternal influence over one such community; to irradiate so many countenances with delight; to fill so many hearts with content, and to prepare so many characters for their future part in life; such an object would be deemed, by an angel, worth an incarnation upon earth.

Or, leaving this scene of her duties, shall we look out and abroad upon the public good—the strength and stability of the nation? For who knows not that the springs of an empire's prosperity lie in the domestic constitution, and in well-trained families Even one such family is a contribution to the majestic flow of a nation's greatness. Can such families exist without woman's care, and oversight, and wisdom? Has it not grown into a proverb, that home has ever been the nursery of great men, and mothers their instructresses? It may be said, as a general principle, that woman is not only the mother of the body, but of the character of her children. To her is first intrusted the instruction

of the mind, the cultivation of the heart, the formation of the life. Thought, feeling, will, imagination, virtue, religion, or the contrary moral tendencies, all germinate under her fostering influence, which also continues to direct their growth. The greatest power in the moral world is that which a mother exercises over her young child. The decisive moment in education is the starting-point. The dominant direction which is to determine the whole course of life, lies concealed in the first years of infancy; and these belong to the mother.

One of the most hallowed, and lovely, and beautiful sights in our world is, woman at home; discharging with all the meekness of wisdom, the various duties of wife, mother, and mistress, with an order that nothing is allowed to disturb; a patience which nothing can exhaust; an affection which is never ruffled; and a perseverance that no difficulties can interrupt, nor any disappointments arrest: in short, such a scene as that described by Solomon, in the most exquisite chapter of his Proverbs. Eve, in Paradise, in all her untainted loveliness, by the side of Adam, propping the lily, training the vine, or directing the growth of the rose; shedding such smiles upon him, and receiving them reflected back from his noble countenance upon her happy spirit, as told in mute language, their perfect and conjoint bliss, was, no doubt, a brighter image of perfect virtue and undisturbed felicity; but to me, the sight of a woman in our fallen world, filling up by her piety, intelligence,

and all matronly and motherly excellences, the circle of a home made happy chiefly by her influence is a scene little inferior in beauty, and even superior in difficulty, to that of our first mother in Paradise. And it is poetry, and not reason and moral taste, that can revel in imagination upon the beauties of the former, and see little to excite our warmest admiration in the latter.

But it will be asked, perhaps, if we would shut up every married woman within the domestic circle, and confine her with the jealousy and authority of an Oriental despot to her own home; or if we would condemn and degrade her to mere household drudgery. We have, we think, protected ourselves already from this imputation, by representing her as the companion, counselor, and comforter of man, Oh, no! she shall, with our consent, never sink down from the side of man, to be trampled under his foot. She shall not have one ray of her glory extinguished, nor be deprived of a single honor that belongs to her sex; but to be the instructress of her children, the companion of her husband, and the queen consort of the domestic state, is no such degradation; and she, only, is degraded who thinks so. Still in connection with, though not in neglect of, this, let her give her influence upon society to the circle of her friends on all suitable occasions, and in all suitable places. Though the drawing-room is not the *chief* sphere of her influence, it is *one* of the circles in which she may move—and albeit incessant parties of pleasure,

and a constant round of entertainments are not her mission, but stand diametrically opposed to it, and hinder it—yet as capable of influencing society for good, she is occasionally to lend that influence, which every wise and good woman exerts over the tone of morals and manners, to the friends who may court her society. Woman is the grace, the ornament, the charm of the social circle; and when she carries into it habits that frown upon vice, that check folly and discountenance levity, she is a benefactress of her country. And as to the various institutions of our age for the relief of suffering humanity, the instruction of ignorance, and the spread of religion, we give her all the room and liberty for these things which are compatible with her duties to her own household. What prudent female would *ask* more, or what advocate of her rights would *claim* more? Woman is always in her place where charity presides, except when her time and attention are demanded at home for those who are more immediately her charge. But we shall have much more to advance on this subject in a future discourse.

But what shall we say of those women who claim on their own behalf, or of their advocates who claim for them, a participation of the labors, the occupations, the rights, and the duties, which have usually been considered as appertaining to the other sex? There are those who would have the line of demarkation expunged, which nearly all nations have drawn between the duties and the occupations of

men and those of women. Christianity has provided a place for woman for which she is fitted, and in which she shines; but take her out of that place, and her luster pales and sheds a feeble and a sickly ray. Or, to change the metaphor, woman is a plant, which in its own green-house seclusion will put forth all its brilliant colors and all its sweet perfume; but remove it from the protection of its own floral home into the common garden and open field, where hardier flowers will grow and thrive, its beauty fades and its odor is diminished. Neither reason nor Christianity invites woman to the professor's chair, nor conducts her to the bar, nor makes her welcome to the pulpit, nor admits her to the place of ordinary magistracy. Both exclude her—not indeed by positive and specific commands, but by general principles and spirit, from the corruption of the camp, the debates of the senate, and the pleadings of the forum. And they bid her beware how she overleaps the delicacy of her sex, and listens to the doctrines of effeminate debaters; or becomes the dupe of modern reformers or fashionable journalists. They forbid us to hear her gentle voice in the popular assembly; and do not even suffer her to speak in the Church of God. They claim not for her the right of suffrage, nor any immunity by which she may "usurp authority over the man." And yet the Bible gives her her throne, for she is the queen of the domestic circle. It is the heart of her husband. It is the heart of her family. It is the female supremacy in that inter-

esting domain, where love, and tenderness, and refinement, thought and feeling preside. It is the privilege of making her husband happy and honored, and her sons and daughters the ornaments of human society. It is the sphere of piety, prudence, diligence, in the domestic station, and a holy and devout life. It is the sphere that was occupied by Hannah, the mother of Samuel; by Elizabeth, the mother of John; by Eunice, the mother of Timothy; and by Mary, the mother of Jesus. It is the respect and esteem of mankind. It is, as one has said, that silent, unobserved, unobtrusive influence, by which she accomplishes more for her race, than many whose names occupy a broad space on the page of history. A woman who fills well the sphere thus assigned to her, as a wife, a mother, and a mistress; who thus trains up good citizens for the state, and good fathers and mothers of other families which are to spring from her own; and, for aught she can tell, still other families from *them*, perhaps in all but an endless succession, need not complain that her sphere of action and her power of influence are too limited for female ambition to aspire to. The mothers of the wise and the good are the benefactresses of their species. What would be gained to woman's comfort, repectability, or usefulness, or to the welfare of society; but how much would be lost to each, by withdrawing her from her own appropriate sphere, and introducing her to that for which she has no adaptation? Who, but a few wild visionaries, and rash speculatists,

and mistaken advocates of woman's rights, would take her from the home of her husband, her children, and her own heart, to wear out her strength, to consume her time, and to destroy her feminine excellence in committee-rooms, on platforms, and in mechanics' or philosophical institutions? But may not woman, in every way in her power, benefit society by her talents and her influence? Certainly, in every legitimate way. Her sphere is clearly assigned to her by Providence; and only by very special and obvious calls should she be induced to leave it. Whatever breaks down the modest reserve, the domestic virtues, the feminine gentleness of woman, is an injury done to the community. Woman *can* be spared from the lecturer's chair, the platforms of general convocation, and the scenes of public business; but she *can not* be spared from the hearth of her husband and the circle of her children. Substitutes can be found for her in the one, but not in the other. In the bosom of domestic privacy she fulfills the truest dignity and faithfulness, the first and highest obligations of her sex. Monod's remarks on this subject are so beautiful, appropriate, and just, that I shall be more than forgiven for the following long quotation:

"Is not the humble sphere which we assign to woman, precisely that for which her whole being is predisposed and preconstituted? Her finer but more fragile conformation, the quicker pulsation of her heart, the more exquisite sensibility of her nerves, the delicacy of her organs, and even the

softness of her features, all combine to make her what St. Peter so aptly designates 'the weaker vessel,' and render her constitutionally unfit for incessant and weighty cares, for the duties of the state, for the vigils of the cabinet, for all that which yields renown in the world.

"Again, are not the powers of her mind equally distinct? The question is sometimes started, are they equal to those of man? They are neither equal nor unequal; they are different, being wisely adapted to another end.

"For the accomplishment of the work assigned to man, woman's faculties are inferior to his; or rather, she is not adapted to it. We speak of the general rule, and not of exceptions. It must be conceded that, by way of exception, there are among women some few whose intellects are adapted to the cares reserved, on principle, to the other sex, or that peculiar situations may rise in which women of ordinary capacities are called upon to discharge the duties assigned to man, man in that case being the defaulter; provided, however, that these exceptions are clearly indicated by God, or called for by the interests of humanity. For after all, in the mission of woman, humility is but the means, charity the end, to which all must be subservient. And why should not God who has made exceptions of this nature in sacred history, do the same in ordinary life?

"Be this as it may, we leave exceptions to God, and to the conscience of the individual, and, ab

staining from all irritating, personal, or contestable questions, will confine ourselves simply to the general rule.

"Generally speaking, enlarged views of politics and science, the bold flight of metaphysics, the sublimer conceptions of poetry, which, bursting every shackle, soar in the boundless region of thought and imagination, are not in the province of woman.

"In that limited sphere, however, of which we are speaking—limited in extent, but boundless in influence, within which, supported by Scripture, we exhort woman to confine her actions; she is endowed with faculties superior to those of man, or, rather, she alone is adapted to it. Here she has her requital; here she proves herself mistress of the field; and employs those secret resources which might be termed admirable, if they did not inspire a more tender sentiment both toward her and toward God, who has so richly endowed her.

"Her practical survey, equally sure and rapid; her quick and accurate perception; her wonderful power of penetrating the heart, in a way unknown and impracticable to man; her never-failing presence of mind and personal attention on all occasions; her constant though imperceptible vigilance; her numerous and fertile resources in the management of her domestic affairs; her ever-ready access and willing audience to all who need her; her freedom of thought and action in the midst of the most agonizing sufferings and accumulated embarrass-

ments; her elasticity—may I say her perseverance? —despite of feebleness; her exquisitely tender feelings; her tact so practiced, were it not instinctive; her extreme perfection in little things; her dexterous industry in the work of her hands (Prov. xxxi. 13); her incomparable skill in nursing the sick; in cheering a broken spirit; in re-awakening a sleeping conscience; in re-opening a heart that has long been closed; in fine, innumerable are the things which she accomplishes, and which man can neither discern nor effect without the aid of her eye and her hand."

Now look at woman's natural adaptation for her sphere. If the view here given of woman's mission be correct, we can in a moment perceive what is required to enable her to fulfill it. There must be, what indeed there generally is pervading the sex, a consciousness of subordination without any sense of degradation, or any wish that it were otherwise. She scarcely needs to be taught that in the domestic economy she is second, and not first, that "the man is the head of the woman." It is a law of nature written on the heart, and coincides exactly with the law of God written on the page of revelation. It is first of all an instinct, and then confirmed by reason. Without this law deeply engraven and constantly felt as well as known, her situation would be endured as a slavery, and she would be constantly endeavoring to throw off the yoke. Her condition would be wretched, and she would make all wretched around her. With such a sense of oppression, or even of hardship pressing upon the mind, no

duty could be well performed, and the family would be a scene of domestic warfare. But she generally knows her place, and feels it her happiness as well as her duty to keep it. It is not necessity, but even choice, that produces a willing subjection. She is contented it should be so, for God has implanted the disposition in her nature.

Then her *gentleness* is another part of her qualification for her duty. She should have, must have, really has influence, power, *im*pulsion, if not *com*pulsion. Were she utterly powerless, she could do nothing. Her influence, however, is a kind of passive power—it is the power that draws rather than drives, and commands by obeying. Her gentleness makes her great. How winning are her smiles; how melting her tears; how insinuating her words! Woman loses her power when she parts from her gentleness. It is this very yieldingness, which, like the bulrush lifting against the force of the stream, before which, for a moment, it has bowed, that gives her a power to rise superior to the force of circumstances, against which, if stern resistance were offered, it would break before them. She vanquishes by submission. How necessary is gentleness to the fulfillment of her mission in handling the young and tender spirits of her children, and training the first delicate shoots of their infantile dispositions; and for directing the feelings of that one heart on which she depends for her happiness. There are vast varieties of disposition in women, and many are sensitive, petulant, irritable, jealous,

quick to feel and to resent; but notwithstanding all this, and even under all this, there *is* a gentleness of disposition which indicates her vocation as destined to influence and constrain by love.

Tenderness is another of her characteristics. The former related more to manner, this more to disposition; that to habitual conduct toward all persons and all cases, this to the occasional exercise of sympathy with distress. Tenderness is so characteristic of the female heart, that an unfeeling woman is considered a libel upon her sex. If compassion were driven out from every other habitation, it would find there its last retreat. Her heart is so made of tenderness, that she is ever in danger of being imposed upon by craft and falsehood. How suitable such a disposition for one who is to be the chief comforter of the domestic economy; who is to mollify the wounds of her husband's heart, and to heal the sorrows of her children; whose ear is to listen to every tale of domestic woe, and whose bosom is to be the lodging-place of all family grief!

Self-denial is no less necessary for this domestic mission, than any thing I have yet mentioned. How much of ease, comfort, enjoyment, must she surrender who has to consult her husband's comfort and will before her own; whose happiness is to consist, in a great measure, in making others happy; who has first to endure all that is connected with giving birth to her children, and then all that is connected with nursing, watching, comforting, and

training them. One of the most striking instances in our world of endurance and self-denial, both as to extent and the cheerfulness with which it is borne, is the busy, tender, and contented mother of a rising family. God has given it to her, or else I sometimes wonder how she can exercise it.

And then see her *fortitude* in this situation. In that courage which leads man to the cannon's mouth, to mount the breach, or to encounter some danger of any other kind, she is inferior to man; but in the fortitude manifested by enduring bodily suffering, the ills of poverty, the wasting influence of long-continued privations, the gloom of solitude, the wrongs of injustice, the cruelty of neglect, the heel of oppression; is she not in all this as superior to man, as man is to her in all that appertains to brute force?

On the subject of woman's fortitude and power of endurance, I will introduce, though it may be at some length, the most surprising instance of it perhaps on record, whether in inspired or uninspired history, which will serve as an appropriate illustration of this part of the subject of my sermon. The apostle John, in his narrative of the events of the crucifixion of our Lord, says with beautiful simplicity, and without a single comment, as if he would not attempt and could not hope to add to the grandeur of the incident: "*Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.*" John xix. 25. That the other women should have

been there is less wonderful, though even their presence at such a scene, from which it would seem as if all the apostles had retired, except John, was indeed an instance of the fortitude of heroic love. But that his MOTHER should have been there, not afar off, but by the cross; not prostrate in a swoon, or beating her breast, wringing her hands, tearing her hair, and shrieking in frantic grief; but *standing* in silent, though pensive anguish, to witness the horrors of crucifixion, so far surpassing those of any modern method of execution; the crucifixion of her son, and such a son! O wondrous woman! and act, surpassing wonder! To whatever length endurance may be carried by attendance at the *sick-bed* of a dying friend, how few of even female heroes could witness the *execution* of a husband, son, or brother! I have read of *one*, who, when her lover was executed for high-treason, had herself conveyed in a mourning-coach to witness the dreadful process; and when the whole was closed by severing the head from the body, that head which had leaned on her bosom, simply said, "I follow thee," and sighing forth the name of her slaughtered friend, fell back in the coach and instantly expired. Here was a power of endurance carried to a point which nature could sustain no longer, and it sunk at length crushed beneath the intolerable burden of its grief. But behold the scene before us; *that* mother, in the dignity and majesty of profound yet composed grief, endured to the end. Peter had denied his Master—the other disciples, at the sight of the officers of

justice and the soldiers, amid the deep shadows of Gethsemane, had deserted Him, and still kept at a distance from the scene of suffering and danger; but there, standing by the cross, were these dauntless holy women, sustaining with wondrous fortitude the sight of his dying agonies, and confessing their Lord in the hour of his deepest humiliation, in the absence of his friends and in the presence of his foes—and there among them was his MOTHER. I shall never wonder at any thing that female fortitude, when upheld by Divine grace, can do, after it could stand in the person of Mary, at the foot of the cross, when Christ her Son and her Lord was suspended upon it. Nor shall I ever despair of the support of any woman in the hour and scene of her deepest woe, who is *willing* to be sustained, after I have beheld the mother of our Lord upheld in that unutterably awful situation. Painters and poets have not done justice to the dignity of this most honored of all women. There is still existing a picture of Annibal Carracci, entitled "The Three Marys," the subject of which is these holy women surveying the body of Christ after it was taken down from the cross. As a work of art it is inimitable, and does full justice to the painter's skill. But it does far less justice to the character of the mother of our Lord, than the apostle's description of her. In the painting she is represented as in a swoon over the dead body of Jesus, whose head reclines on her lap, while the other figures are set forth in the attitudes of passionate grief. How dif

ferent this to the dignified, majestic, and composed grief which *stood* beneath the cross! So far must art ever fall beneath nature, still lower below the wonders of grace, and most of all below such grace as this.

Let woman study this pathetic and amazing scene, and learn that the deepest love, or the noblest grief, is not that sickly sensibility, that emotional excitability, which is too tender to bear the sight of suffering; but that which, instead of sinking into hysterical outcries, or retiring with averted eyes from the sufferer's agonies, or is borne swooning from the sight of tears and blood, can control its feelings, and brace its nerves, to perform a woman's part in the hour and scene of woe, and which none *can* perform except herself, or, at any rate, perform so well. Let *young* women set out in life practicing that discipline of their emotions, which, without diminishing aught of the softness and the tenderness of manner which are the most feminine characteristics of their sex, or robbing their hearts of those delicate sympathies and sensibilities which constitute the glory of woman's nature, shall not envelope her judgment in a mist of feeling, and so enervate her will, as to make her incapable of resolution, and render her incompetent in times of her own sorrow and trial, for any thing besides weeping over the calamities which she might otherwise remove, and make her altogether unfit for those hardy services of mercy, which the miseries of others will sometimes require at her hands.

Arising out of this, and as one beautiful display of it, see her when called to put forth her gentleness, her sympathy, and her self-denial, in the hour of affliction, and the chamber of sickness. It has been somewhere beautifully said, that, "In sickness, there is no hand like woman's hand, no heart like woman's heart; and there is not. A man's breast may swell with unquestionable sorrow, and apprehension may rend his mind; yet place him by the sick couch, and in the shadow, rather than in the light of the sad lamp that watches it; let him have to count over the long, dull hours of night, and wait, alone and sleepless, the struggle of the gray dawn into the chamber of suffering, let him be appointed to this ministry, even for the sake of the brother of his heart, or the father of his being, and his grosser nature, even where it is most perfect, will tire; his eye will close, and his spirit grow impatient of the dreary task; and though love and anxiety remain undiminished, his mind will own to itself a creeping in of irresistible selfishness, which, indeed, he may be ashamed of, and struggle to reject, but which, despite of all his efforts, remains to characterize his nature, and prove, in one instance, at least, his manly weakness. But see a mother, a sister, or a wife, in his place! The woman feels no weariness, and owns no recollection of self. In silence, and in the depth of night, she dwells not only passively, but so far as the qualified term may express our meaning, joyously. Her ear acquiring a blind man's instinct, as, from time to time, it

catches the slightest stir, or whisper, or breath, of the now more than ever loved one, who lies under the hand of human affliction. Her step, as in obedience to an impulse or a signal, would not waken a mouse; if she speaks, her accents are a soft echo of natural harmony, most delicious to the sick man's ear, conveying all that sound can convey of pity, comfort, and devotion; and thus, night after night, she tends him like a creature sent from a higher world, when all earthly watchfulness has failed; *her* eye never winking, *her* mind never palled, *her* nature, which, at all other times, is weakness, now gaining a superhuman strength and magnanimity, *herself* forgotten, and her sex alone predominant."

But as woman's mission is, in an especial sense, one of charity, love is, above all things, essential to its right performance. Here, again, I will give a long quotation from Monod's beautiful work:

"But in speaking of love, it is less the degree than the character which is of importance. Love, as we have before said, is the very essence of woman's existence. But what love? Let her reflect, and she will find that it is precisely that love which predisposes her for the vocation of beneficence prescribed for her by the Scriptures. There are two kinds of love—love which receives, and love which gives. The former rejoices in the sentiment which it inspires, and the sacrifice it obtains; the second delights in the sentiment which it experiences, and the sacrifice which it makes. These

two kinds of love seldom subsist apart, and woman knows them both. But is it too much to say, that in her the second predominates? and that her motto, borrowed from the spontaneous love of her Saviour is, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'—Acts xx. 33.

"To be loved! This, we well know, is the joy of a woman's heart; but, alas! how often is this joy denied her! Yet let her continue to love—to consecrate herself by love; it is the exigency of her soul—the very law of her existence; a law which nothing can ever hinder her from obeying.

"Man, also, is no stranger to this feeling; he, too, must love; but his is the love in which St. Paul sums up the obligations imposed upon the husband in conjugal life. 'Husbands, love your wives,' even as he sums up the duties of submission on the part of the wife: 'Wives, obey your husbands.' But what we are treating of here, is not the obligation, nor the faculty: it is the inclination to love.

"Love, it must be remembered, is less spontaneous—less disinterested among men than among women. Less spontaneous: man is often obliged to conquer himself, in order to love; woman need only listen to the dictates of her innate feelings. Hence, Scripture, which frequently commands 'the husband to love,' abstains from giving this command to the wife, taking it for granted that nature herself would supply the injunction.

"Moreover, the love of woman is more disinter-

ested. Man loves woman more for his own sake than for hers; woman, on the contrary, loves man less for her own sake than for his. Man, because he is not sufficient in himself, loves that which has been given him of God; woman, because she feels that she is needed, loves him to whom God has given her. If solitude weighs heavily upon man, it is because life has no charms for him when separated from his helpmeet; if woman dreads living alone, it is because life has lost its aim, while she has none to whom she can be 'an helpmeet.' Of her it may be said, if we may be permitted to make the comparison, in the emphatic language of Scripture, 'We love her, because she first loved us.'"

If such, then, *be* woman's mission, and who will deny or question it, then how immensely important is it that this should be well understood, and that she should be properly trained to perform it well. But *is* this *really* understood, and *is* education so conducted as to qualify woman for her mission? It requires little knowledge of modern society to answer these questions in the negative.

Parents, and especially mothers, ye who have daughters, to *you* appertains the serious, and deliberate, and prayerful consideration, of this momentous and deeply interesting subject. Look upon those girls whom Providence has committed to your care, and say to yourselves, "I very distinctly perceive, and as impressively feel, the importance of the female character on account of its influence upon the well-being of society. And it is clear to me, that

woman's is a domestic mission, which is to affect society through the medium of family influence. As she fills up her place with wisdom and propriety, so will she promote the well-being of the community. Nor is it society only, but the Church of Christ, that is concerned in, and promoted by, the female character. Now, *I* have daughters, who must contribute their share of influence to the public weal or woe. How shall they be educated, so as best to fulfill *their* mission, should they be called to preside over the domestic economy? It depends much upon *me*, whether they fail or succeed in this their mission." These are appropriate, weighty, and necessary reflections, and they peculiarly belong to mothers. To them, I say, in all your conduct never let these thoughts and views be long out of your minds. Look beyond the drawing-rooms of your friends, where your daughters are to be sometimes *seen*, perhaps *shown*. Look higher than to get them married, even *well* married. Take into account their being well qualified to fulfill their mission. Set them before you as the future heads of a domestic establishment, and prepare them to preside over it with dignity and efficiency.

How much in modern education is calculated, if not intended, rather to prepare our females to dazzle in the circle of fashion and the gay party, than to shine in the retirement of home. To polish the exterior by what are called accomplishments, seems to be more the object, than to give a solid substratum of piety, intelligence, good sense, and social

virtue. Never was a subject less understood than education. To store the memory with facts, or to cultivate the taste for music, singing, drawing, languages, and needle-work, are the ultimatum with many. The use of the intellect in the way of deep reflection, sound judgment, accurate discrimination, is not taught as it should be; while the direction of the will, the cultivation of the heart, and the formation of the character, are lamentably neglected. We ask not the sacrifice of any thing that can add grace, and elegance, and ornament, to the feminine character; but we do want incorporated with this, more of what is masculine in knowledge and wisdom. We want to see woman educated not to be man's play-thing, but his companion. We want to see her invested with something higher and better than fashionable littlenesses, elegant trifles, and fascinating airs. We want her to be fitted to hold fast her husband's heart by the esteem he bears for her judgment; to inspire the confidence and reverence of her children, and in that home where her potent influence is felt, to train up men and women who shall add to the strength and glory of the nation.

In this, let mothers be assisted by those to whom they intrust the education of their daughters when they pass from their hands. It is melancholy to think of the incompetency of a large portion of those to whom the education of females is intrusted. How little has it ever occurred to many of them to inquire into woman's mission: what is necessary to qualify them for it, and how they shall aid her in

obtaining this fitness. How rarely does it come within their comprehension that it is their duty, and should be their study, not only to give knowledge, but wisdom; not only to train the performer, the artist, or the linguist, but to lay the foundation of the character of the sincere Christian, the intelligent woman, the prudent wife, the judicious mother, the sagacious mistress, and the useful member of society.

And if in a sermon to women, and when I am addressing mothers, there be no impropriety in turning aside for a few moments to address myself as well to fathers, I would say to them, study deeply, and ponder much the momentous importance of THE DOMESTIC CONSTITUTION. In the present age, how much has been said and written respecting *improvements in society;* but never let it be forgotten that all radical improvement must commence in the homes and at the hearts of our families. All inquiries how best to cure existing evils, or to supply existing defects, which do not begin here, will be superficial in their nature, and unsatisfactory in their results. It is in the correct understanding of the nature of parental obligations, and right discharge of the duties of man and wife toward each other and their children, that the chief restorative remedy for the diseases of a nation must be sought, as well as the best means of preserving its health. Institutions may be set up to aid or to supplement a father's efforts, or to alter the nature, or widen the sphere of woman's mission; and an artificial state of social life may be produced, var-

nished and glittering with the showy devices of human wisdom, but it will be found in the end, that the purposes of the God of nature, the Great Author of human society, can not be frustrated; and that the parent must still be regarded as the educator of the child, and home the school for the formation of character.

And here I would remind you of your privileges as Protestants, in having no intruder thrusting himself into your families, or exerting, without coming there, through the medium of the *confessional*, and from behind the parent's chair, an influence greater than that of the parent's, whether father or mother. A French writer thus depicts the homes of his country: "The question is about our family—that sacred asylum in which we all desire to seek the repose of the heart. We return, exhausted, to the domestic hearth; but do we find there the repose we sigh for? Let us not dissemble, but acknowledge to ourselves how things are. There is, in our family, a sad difference of sentiment, and the most serious of all. We may speak to our mothers, wives, and daughters, on any of the subjects which form the topics of conversation, with indifferent persons, such as business, or the news of the day; but never on subjects that affect the heart, or moral life, such as eternity, religion, the soul, and God! Choose, for instance, the moment when we naturally feel disposed to meditate with our family in common thought, some quiet evening, at the family table; venture even there—in your own house—at your

own fireside—to say one word about these things: your mother sadly shakes her head; your wife contradicts you; your daughter, by her very silence, shows her disapprobation. They are on one side of the table, and you on the other, alone. One would think that in the midst of them, and opposite to you, was seated an invisible personage to contradict whatever you may say." This scene the author can not forget. He recurs to it once more: "You enter a house in the evening, and sit down at the family table; one thing will almost always strike you: the mother and daughters are, together, of one and the same opinion, on one side, while the father is on the other, and alone. What does this mean? It means that there is some one man at his table whom you do not see, to contradict and give the lie to whatever the father may utter."*

* "Priests, Women, and Families," by Michelet. There are many opinions in this work, of which I can not, for a moment, be supposed to approve, but is not this view of the domestic economy in France too true? According to this author, there are more than 620,000 girls training up by nuns, under the direction, too, of men, themselves unmarried, and therefore grossly ignorant of what a family is. To these he adds 200,000 boys, 6,000 sisters of charity, and myriads of women. All these youths, it will be remembered, are but single branches, young and tender ones, too, unnaturally torn from their parent stem or family tree. Thus the domestic hearth of every home is daily infested by the intrusion of one man, strangely styled the *director*, or spirtual guide! The individual whom we are accustomed to regard as the head of the house—the father—is treated by the intruder as a *cipher*. In his absence, court is

Nor should young females themselves be kept in ignorance of woman's mission. Their future destiny, as stated in the last sermon, should sometimes by a wise mother or an able governess, be set before them; and they themselves reminded how much will be needed on their part, to prepare themselves for their future lot. They must be reminded that above and beyond accomplishments, there is character to be formed, which never can be done without their own aid. They must be early impressed —not indeed in a way to inflate their vanity, but to excite their ambition, to stimulate their energies, and to direct their aim—that they have a mission on earth, for which it becomes them most anxiously and most diligently to prepare themselves. Let it be your constant aim, and at the same time your earnest prayer, that you may first of all thoroughly understand your mission, and then diligently prepare for it, and hereafter as successfully fulfill it. Look round and see what women commend themselves most to your judgment as worthy of imitation. You will see some, perhaps, in whom, as Monod says,

paid to the mother—the weaker vessel—and what is truly melancholy as well as singular, we are expressly assured, the father is generally aware that these men are bringing up his children against himself! A more fatal invasion of God's own domestic constitution has never been framed and so shamefully accomplished. It resembles the recorded origin of all evil. Here is the serpent once more beguiling Eve through his subtlety. This intruder on forbidden ground must prove 'the canker-worm of many a gentle breast."—ANDERSON'S *Domestic Constitution*

reserve has degenerated into supineness, activity into restlessness, vigilance into curiosity, tact into cunning, penetration into censoriousness, promptitude into levity, fluency into loquacity, grace into coquetry, taste into fastidiousness, aptitude into presumption, influence into intrigue, empire into domination, and tenderness into morbid susceptibility; some whose power of loving is converted into jealousy; and their desire of usefulness into obtrusiveness. From such turn away, as from examples in which the best qualities are metamorphosed into the worst. And equally avoid those whose whole aim seems to be to amuse and be amused; whose vanity is predominant, even in matronly age; and who appear, in their taste for gayety, company, and entertainments, to forget that they have any mission upon earth, except to flutter in a drawing-room, and to dazzle its guests. On the contrary, select for your models those who seem to be aware of woman's destiny and mission, as A HELPMEET FOR MAN.

If in closing a sermon, already too long, I may suggest a few things which, in preparing to fulfill well your future mission, it is of importance you should attend to, I would mention the following:

Deeply ponder, that character for life is usually formed in youth. It is the golden season of life, and to none more truly and eminently so than to the young woman. Her leisure, her freedom from care, and her protected situation, give her the opportunity for this, which it is her wisdom and her duty to consider, embrace, and improve.

It is of immense consequence you should consider that whosoever may help you, and whatever appliances from without may be brought to bear upon your mind and heart, you must, to a considerable extent, be the constructor of your own character. Set out in life with a deep conviction of the momentous consequence of self-discipline. Let your mind, your heart, your conscience, be the chief object of your solicitude.

Lay the basis of all your excellences in true religion—the religion of the heart—the religion of penitence, faith in Christ, love to God, a holy and heavenly mind. No character can be well-constructed, safe, complete, beautiful, or useful, without this.

Cultivate those dispositions of mind which have especial reference to your future mission as the help-meet for man. Improve your mind, and grow in intelligence by a thirst for knowleege; for how can an ignorant woman be a companion for a sensible man? Cherish a thoughtful, reflective turn of mind. Look beneath the surface of things; beyond their present aspect to their future consequences. Be somewhat meditative, and learn to restrain your words and feelings by a rigid self-control. Pay most anxious attention to your temper, and acquire as much as possible its perfect command. More women are rendered miserable, and render others miserable, by neglect of this than perhaps by any other means whatever. Let meekness of disposition and gentleness of manner be a constant study.

These are woman's amiabilities, which fit her for her future situation far better than the bold, imposing, and obtrusive airs of those who mistake the secret of woman's influence.

Contentment and patience, self-denial and submission, humility and subordination, prudence and discretion, are all virtues, the seeds of which should be sown by you in early youth, that the rich ripe fruits of them might be gathered in future life. Benevolence of heart, and kindness of disposition, must be among your foremost studies, the most prominent objects of your pursuit and most laborious endeavors, for these are the virtues which in their maturity are to form the matronly excellence, and constitute you the fit companion for a husband.

Make accomplishments subordinate to more substantial excellences. Let the former be to the latter only as the burnish of the gold, or the sparkle of the diamond. And as matters of mental taste are to be less thought of than the state of the heart and the formation of moral character, so let especially corporeal decorations be in low estimation compared with those of the mind.

To prepare you to carry out the duties of your future mission with ease to yourself, with satisfaction to a husband, and comfort to a household, pay attention to *the minor virtues*—punctuality, love of order, and dispatch. These are all of immense importance: the want of them in the female head of a family, must necessarily fill the home with confusion, and the hearts of its inmates with sadness.

Set out in life with a deep conviction of the importance of habits, and a constant recollection that habits for life are formed in youth; and that these habits, if not acquired then, are *never* likely to be.

Aim at universal excellence. Do little things well. Avoid with extreme dread a loose, slovenly, and careless way of doing any thing proper to be done.

Young Women, your whole future life will illustrate and confirm the truth and propriety of this advice, either by the comfort and usefulness which result from attending to it, or by the personal and relative misery which will inevitably follow, from your casting it into oblivion. It is in this way only you can fulfill with effect that which it has been the object of this discourse to set before you—WOMAN'S MISSION IN SOCIAL LIFE.

Early Female Piety.

"I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me."—PROVERBS viii. 17.

IN the world of nature, we are now passing through the vernal quarter of the year. Spring, lovely, animating spring, is shedding its reviving and gladdening smiles upon us. It is always a season of *beauty*. "For lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land." Nature stands forth dressed in her garb of living green, decorated with the chaste colors, and perfumed with the mild fragrance of the violet, the primrose, and the cowslip. It is a season of *joy* as well as beauty; recovered from the gloom of wintry months, the earth smiles, and is vocal with delight. The feathered songsters of the grove blend their notes with the lowing of the herds and the bleating of the flocks; and the harmony is completed by the joyful sounds of the husbandman, and the gentle swell of the ocean breaking mildly upon the shore. But it is also a season of *activity*, as well as of love-

liness and delight. The farmer is busy in his fields, the florist in his green-house, and the horticulturist in his garden; and the torpor produced by short days and cold nights is succeeded by universal motion: for full well is it known and felt, that a seedless spring must be followed by a fruitless autumn. *Hope* adds the finishing mark, the stroke of grace, to vernal scenes. The blade springing from the well-cultivated soil, and the blossom pendant from the well-pruned tree, give the promise and prospect of the future crop.

And what is youth but the vernal period of existence; it *is* the season of beauty and of joy; it *should be* the season of activity and of hope. It is now that the beauty of the human form is in all its untainted freshness, and the spirits of our animal nature are in all their unchecked vigor. And it should be now that all the energies of the soul are put forth in the way of self-improvement, to awaken the hopes, not only of their possessor, but of every observer. Do, my young friends, thus look abroad upon the field of nature; not only to poetize, but to moralize; not only to admire, but to imitate; not only to feel the throb of pleasure and thrill of delight, but to learn lessons of wisdom, and collect motives for self-improvement. You are, then, *indeed* you are, passing through your moral spring, and as in nature, so in your existence, there can be but *one* spring in the year; and in each case, it is the spring that will give the character to the whole of the year that follows. It is then the seeds of in

telligence, of prudence, of virtue, of piety must be sown, or there will be no produce in the after-periods of your history. A seedless spring must here also be followed by a fruitless autumn, and a destitute, dreary, and cheerless winter.

This sermon is devoted to the enforcement of early piety.

Your first concern—and deep, indeed, should that concern be—is, of course, to *understand the nature of real religion.* This is of momentous importance. No language can exaggerate it. There *can* be no hyperbole here. Upon a right understanding of this subject is suspended your happiness for eternity. Ponder that word ETERNITY, and think of the millions of millions of ages, passing comprehension, it includes; all to be filled with torment or bliss, according as you understand and practice, or mistake the nature and neglect the claims of true religion. Should not this awaken solicitude of the deepest kind? What should increase the concern of your mind to deep solicitude, and almost to distress, is that both our Lord and his apostles lead us to believe, by what they have said, that mistakes on this subject are very common and very destructive, as you may learn by consulting the following passages of Holy Scripture: Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24; Matt. vii. 13–28; 1 Cor. xiii.; 2 Cor. xiii. 5–7; Gal. iv. 11–18; vi. 3–5.

To guard against mistakes, go to the right source of information; consult the only infallible oracle—the Word of God. You have the Bible in your

hand; search that—search it yourselves, and *for* yourselves. Do not be satisfied with merely consulting men's works, but consult God's own Word. All churches, whatever they may boast, *may* err, *have* erred, and have no authority or ability to settle this matter for you. Creeds and catechisms prayer-books and missals, formularies and confessions, are none of them pure truth; *this* appertains only to the Bible. The Bible, the Bible alone, is the religion of Christians. Not that I would have you reject the *help* of these things, but only their authority. A humble, docile mind will be thankful for human aid in the great business of religion. There is a medium between despising assistance and so depending upon it as to cast off all self-inquiry. The pert and flippant self-sufficiency which would lead a young woman to neglect, much more despise, the judgment of those who have studied the Word of God more closely than it is possible she can have done, and whose calling it is to teach it, is no proof of that humility which is one of the brightest ornaments of her sex. It can not, therefore, be my intention to teach young females to think lightly of ministers and books, in the momentous concerns of religion; but simply to remind them of their duty to search the Scriptures for themselves, by which authority all books and all ministers are to be tried.

Before we come to this source of information on the nature of religion, we may just remark that there are one or two things which we may presume be-

forehand *must* of necessity characterize it. Since religion has first of all and chiefly to do with God, and since God can and does regard, search, and judge the heart—*the true seat of religion must be the heart.* It is not a mere outward thing—a round of ceremonies—or a course of unintelligent action. The *soul* must be religious; our whole inner self—the intellect—the will—the affections—the conscience—must be under the influence of piety. Mark this: there must be thought—choice—affection—conscientiousness. Again, whatever be true religion, it must *primarily relate to God*, and must of necessity be a right state of mind and heart toward him. It must also be to its possessor a very serious, solemn, important matter; it supposes great concern, for it is an affair for salvation—eternity—heaven. It must make a very different kind of character from that of the person who is not living under its influence. It is too great a matter to leave no mark, to produce no impression, to form no peculiarity. So that we may be sure while it *lives* properly in the heart, it will develop itself visibly in the outward character.

With these ideas, which are at once obvious, instructive, and impressive, let us open the New Testament and see what descriptions of religion we find there; and we beg your very closest attention to them, as in the presence of God and the prospect of eternity. The apostle Paul, in setting forth the subject and substance of his ministry, describes it thus: "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the

Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ"—Acts xx. 21. This, then, is true religion—*repentance* and *faith*. If we turn to the Gospel by John, we read thus: "But as many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"—Chap. i. 12, 13. This is also repeated in the third chapter: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God." *This* is religion, a new *spiritual birth;* or, in other words, an entire spiritual renovation of our fallen and corrupt nature. Then, again, we may quote the apostle's words in that beautiful chapter on charity: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity"—1 Cor. xiii. 13. *This* also is religion—*faith, hope, love.* Similar to this is his language in his Epistle to the Galatians: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love"—Chap. v. 6. This is an immensely important passage, as showing that no outward ceremonial observances or church relationship constitute religion; but a true, simple faith in Christ for salvation; producing love to God, to man, to holiness. This accords with what our Lord said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great command-

ment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets"—Matt. xxii. 37–40. Then, again, the apostle said, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works"—Titus ii. 11–14. As marking the solicitude which characterizes true religion, we may refer to Acts xvi.: "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?" And what was Paul's answer? "BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved."

Observe, then, from these passages, what *is* religion and its usual order? True conviction of sin; deep solicitude about pardon and salvation; confession of sin, without defense, excuse, or palliation; genuine repentance; self-renunciation; faith in Christ, or a simple reliance on him for salvation; the new birth, or an entire change of our corrupt nature; love to God, leading to obedience of his commands; and a holy life, a serious observance of all the ordinances of religion, including baptism and the Lord's Supper. Are these things so? Is this the description of religion given us in the New Testament? Who will pretend to deny it? Search

for yourselves! You will see at once how this answers to the general description of it previously given, as a thing of the heart—a right state of mind toward God—a matter of deep concern to the mind that possesses it—and making an obvious distinction between him who has it and him who has it not.

You are in danger, my young friends, from the female temperament—from your sensibility, susceptibility, and imaginativeness—of having your minds led astray on the subject of religion, and of considering it rather as a matter of feeling than of principle—as belonging rather to the emotions than to the judgment and the will. You are liable to be seduced from the truth by appeals to the senses and the imagination, with which the spurious religion of the present day abounds. But I again say, search the New Testament and judge for yourselves, and say what do you find there about tasteful architecture, gorgeous ceremonies, splendid dresses, sacerdotal assumptions, sacred days, either of fasting or festivity, church authority, or even of the prevalence of devotional observances over moral duties. What you find everywhere is faith, love, peace, hope, holiness; a religion of which devotion is, indeed, *an* element; but only *one* out of many; being ever associated with self-government, conscientiousness, social excellence, and charity. Nor is the religion of the New Testament merely that state of mind which is moved by a pathetic sermon, which melts at the Lord's Supper, or is excited by

the picturesque appeals of a missionary meeting. Religion has to do, I know, with our *whole* nature, and therefore with its emotional part; but then, the degree of sensibility so much depends upon physical constitution, that excitability by religious ordinances is far less to be depended upon as a test of personal godliness, than a rigid self-government, a resolute will in the way of righteousness, and a tender conscientiousness, carried on in obedience to the Divine authority, and under a constraining sense of the love of Christ. None are more in danger, therefore, of self-delusion on this subject than yourselves.

I may now lay before you the OBLIGATIONS you are under to possess, and ever to cultivate and act under the influence of such a religion as this. I say *obligations*. This is a stern, hard word, but not too much so. The subject is pressed down upon your judgment, heart, will, and conscience, by all the weight and power of a divine authority. Religion is not one of those matters which are submitted to your option, for which, if you have a taste, well; and if not, still well. Nor are you left to form your own religion, and to select for yourself just in what form you will please God and find your way to heaven. This is the dangerous delusion of many in the present day. It is all well enough, they think, to be religious after some fashion; but each must adopt his own way of serving God. Upon this principle of resolving it all into taste, the person of no religion, if his taste be

that way, is on nearly the same footing as he whose religion is simply according to his own liking. The truth must be told, and told plainly, too, that there is but one religion, and that is the religion of the Bible. To be pious at all, we must be pious in God's way. It would be a strange thing if, when a master had given any strict, explicit, and even written orders to a servant, how he would be served, the servant should choose his own way of obedience, and set aside the directions he had received. In all honesty, therefore, I must tell you at once, harsh as the declaration may seem, that without religion, and without the religion of the Bible, too, you will perish everlastingly. There is no way to heaven but by the religion of the Bible. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him"—John iii. 36. These are awful words—they roll like thunder, and flash like lightning, not from Sinai, but even from Calvary, and they should be pondered by all who hear or read them.

The obligations to a life of religion arise out of the relations in which you stand to God. He is your Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, and you are his creatures, his dependents, and his beneficiaries. You feel, my young friends, your obligations to your parents, arising out of your relation to them. As a child, you feel bound to love, and serve, and please them. What! and not feel your relation to God, which is a thousand times more

close than that of your connection with them Yes, you sustain an individual relationship to God. Do you consider this? *Have* you considered it? Have you ever yet, in devout seriousness, said, What and where is God, my Maker? What do I owe him, and how should I conduct myself toward him? Is God the only relation you should leave out of consideration, and forget? Did you ever yet, in all your life, devoutly ponder this relationship to God, and the claims which it brings? Why, if he had never commanded you to love and serve him, you ought to do so, on account of this relationship. But he *has* commanded it. Your Bible is his demand upon you. It is God's voice enjoining you to be truly, and constantly, and consistently religious. It is his formal, explicit, frequently, and solemnly-repeated claim. Its injunctions command—its invitations allure—its promises encourage—its threatenings warn—its judgments alarm you, to be truly pious. It is given to teach you what religion is, how it is to be practiced, and how it will be rewarded.

And then this is all addressed to *you*. Religion is not merely the concern of the middle-aged and the old, but of the young; not of the other sex only, but of yours. Indeed, it has ever flourished more among persons of your sex and age than among any other class. To imagine it is only the business of old age and a death-bed, is an insult both to it and to God. Ought he not to have the first and the best of our days? Should he be put

off with the dregs of life? Will you dare entertain such an idea as offering those dying remains of existence, that are of no service for any thing else—the refuse of sin, Satan, and the world? Does not your fear tremble at such a thought, and your generosity scorn it, and your sense of gratitude recoil from it?

I will now advance some MOTIVES by which early piety may be enforced upon *you*, some persuasives to induce you to submit to its influence.

Alas, that you should need them! Think of its being told to the angels in heaven, that mortals upon earth need to be urged by inducements to love, serve, and glorify that God whose service is felt to be their bliss, their honor, and their reward. However, you do need them, and they are at hand.

There are motives which apply to you in common with the other sex. Such, for instance, as the nature of religion itself. What for dignity, for happiness, for honor, can be compared with it? What constituted the glory of unfallen woman in Paradise? Religion. It was her piety toward God that invested Eve, before she had spoiled the beauty of her soul, with her brightest charms. Conceive of her, bending in lowly reverence, in ardent affection, and in ineffable gratitude, before the throne of God; passing with holy dread and averted eye the tree of knowledge, to feed upon the fruit which grew upon the tree of life, and hold communion with her husband in that sacramental type and pledge of immortality. Not a thought, or feeling,

or volition was then in opposition to God. She heard his voice in the garden, and hasted to meet him. Now religion is intended to bring you back as near to that state as our fallen nature in this sinful world will admit of. Yea, religion was the repose of her happy and holy spirit, of which the fall deprived her, and which it is the design of the whole scheme of redemption to restore to her daughters as well as to her sons. True, your religion must have some ingredients which hers before her lapse had not; but in so far as it consists in the service of God, it is the same in substance. Look up into heaven, and what constitutes the felicity and glory of the blessed inhabitants of that happy world? Is not *religion* the beauty of every spirit made perfect—the ephod in which every seraph ministers before the throne of the Eternal? But to judge of the real dignity, honor, and felicity of true religion, hear what our Divine Lord said. On one occasion, "A certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked." And who does not justify this congratulation to that distinguished woman, to whom was granted the honor of being the mother of the Saviour of the world? What woman on earth would not have esteemed such an honor infinitely higher than to have been the queen of the whole earth? And yet what was the reply of Christ? "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it"—Luke xi. 27, 28. "Yea,

she is to be congratulated; but still higher is the honor of being a child of God by true piety, than the abstract honor of being the mother of Christ without it." Beautiful is the language of Quesnel, the pious Jansenist, on this passage· "The holy Virgin is not blessed in having borne Christ on any other account; but only because he, being much more holy than the holiest of saints, made her worthy to be his mother by sanctifying her. Christ does not blame the woman for praising his mother, but he completes it by intimating that her blessedness proceeded from her having borne the Son of God in her heart, even before she bare him in her womb." In other words, he declares her honor as a woman would have been of no account to her, but for her religion as a saint.*

Is it possible, my young female friends, to find a richer, loftier commendation of the dignity and felicity of true religion than this, which places those who possess it higher than the mere honor of giving

* Could any language of our Lord have tended more effectually to rebuke those preposterous and blasphemous honors to the Virgin, which are set up by the Papists? It would seem as if, foreseeing all that the Church of Rome has accumulated of error and impiety in this way, he had determined in the most effectual and impressive manner, to furnish the antidote and refutation in this impressive language. Let any one study the spirit of this reply of Christ to the congratulation of the woman that blessed his mother, and say if it is not the most convincing answer which could be given to the dreadful system of Mariolatry, which prevails so extensively in that corrupt and apostate Church.

fect, you will be able to turn away from earth when it is holding out its brightest scenes to your view, and scarcely cast one longing, lingering look behind.*

But should you live, as in all probability you will, still if you neglect religion in youth, you will most likely neglect it forever. There is nothing in any case, and in reference to any thing, more likely to perpetuate itself than neglect. Procrastination grows, like other things, with indulgence. Nothing in all the world requires prompt decision so much as religion. Nothing is more likely to be postponed forever, if postponed from the present moment. I have no doubt you *intend* to be pious. You would shudder at the idea of deliberately purposing and determining to abandon religion forever. It would appear to you the height of impiety, a species of blasphemy, to say, "I will never become a Christian." Yes, and it is thus that Satan would cheat you out of your salvation. He will allow you to be as solemn, and serious, and even sincere in your intentions, as you please, to be religious at some future time, if he can persuade you to put it off from the present moment "to a more convenient season." But you must be told that not one in a thousand of those who go through the period of youth amid evangelical advantages of religion, and with a deliberate postponement of the

* See an illustration of this in the appendix extracted from the author's little volume, entitled, "The Flower Faded; or, Memoir of Clementine Cuvier.'

matter to futurity, ever fulfill their purposes. Those who come to womanhood, and collect around them the cares and anxieties of a wife, a mother, and a mistress, without religion, rarely ever find leisure or inclination for it in such circumstances.

But I now go on to dwell on some motives and persuasions to early piety, which appertain with greater force to *your* sex than to the other, or, at any rate, to a large proportion of them. Consider, then, *your natural temperament.* There can be no doubt that though religion is not exclusively, or principally, it is *partially* a matter of emotion. In many affairs of human conduct we are moved to action partly by our feelings, even before the decisions of the judgment are made and deliberated upon. The head *should* always move and lead the heart, but oftentimes the heart rouses and moves the head. The feelings are excited even when the judgment is only half-awake and informed. This is, no doubt, the case in religion. Your quicker sensibility, your softer nature, your tenderer heart, your greater imaginativeness, render you ever naturally more susceptible of pious impression. Religion contains, not only much that is stern, bold, sublime; much that is truly logical and truly philosophical, which addresses itself to the judgment, but much that is pathetic, tender, really touching, that appeals to the heart. You are more easily moved to fear, and therefore the terrors of the Di ine law have greater power to cause you to tremble. You are more readily excited to pity, sorrow, and love; and

therefore the gospel—that wondrous mixture of suffering, grief, and mercy—more powerfully stirs up your tender emotions, and calls into exercise your gentle affections. I do not forget that you partake of the common corruption of our nature. and that you also need the grace of the Holy Spirit for your conversion; but still I contend, that so far as natural advantages are to be taken into consideration, the very temperament of your minds is in your favor. Hence it is, that so many more women are truly pious than men. It is not that the gospel is unworthy the more robust intellect of the other sex, but that it falls in more with the softer nature of yours. In most things the God of grace seems to follow the order established by the God of nature. For *you* to neglect religion, therefore, seems a greater opposition to the very constitution of your minds than even for the other sex.

I may mention in reference to many of you, *your sheltered condition at home*, and the protection you there enjoy. Your brothers must go out into the world, encounter its temptations, and be exposed to its moral dangers. While they are in peril of making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience on the troubled ocean of human life, there are you in the quiet haven of a pleasant domicile. Or, to change the metaphor, you are nestling under cover of a mother's wing, while they are left, in all their inexperience and moral feebleness, to the attacks of birds of prey. A young man's life, away from home, is always, but especially in these times, a perilous

situation to his spiritual and eternal welfare. The eye of his father can not watch him, nor his voice warn him; but you are always under inspection, and the first symptom of misconduct is observed, and calls forth expostulation.

Besides this, at home *you enjoy*, if the children of the godly, *many religious advantages*. There, the morning and evening sacrifice at the altar of family devotion is offered, in which you are called to join. There, you regularly accompany your parents to the house of God, keep holy the Sabbath, and enjoy the other ordinances of social worship. There, you are guarded from the withering influence of evil companionship. How favorable is all this to the cultivation of piety. Should your heart be inclined to serve the Lord, you have not to encounter the jeers of scoffing associates, the poisoned arrows of infidel wit, or the sharp spears of profane humor. No hero or martyr-like moral courage is requisite to enable *you* to persevere in a religious course, as is sometimes the case with your brothers; on the contrary, every advantage will be afforded you; the stones will be gathered out of your path, and the narrow gate that leadeth to life will be widened.

Nor is this all, for independently of parental vigilance and home-protection, your sex is *less exposed to the assaults of those temptations* which assail young men, conquer the virtue of so many, and harden their hearts against the impressions of religion. A keen sense of female decorum has thrown a cover

ing over you. By common consent, a vicious woman is a *more* vicious character than a profligate man, and hence a more rare one. The prodigal son is, alas! no unfrequent character; but the prodigal *daughter* does not often occur. A tenth part of the criminality which some men commit who yet retain their place in respectable society, would banish woman from it forever. That there is far too much of this toleration for the vices of our sex by the members of yours is certain, and does not speak so well for even your regard for virtue as could be wished. But that there is too much *in*tolerance of the improprieties of female conduct, can not be admitted. It is this high sense of female honor, this moral delicacy, this fastidious modesty, which are at once your glory and your protection. But then this very circumstance increases your responsibility. *You* are not hardened by crime into insensibility, nor confirmed by repeated acts of sin in guilty habits, nor petrified by infidelity into a stone-like indifference to religious impressions. The moral susceptibilities are not so blunted by long-continued vicious courses as to leave no avenue open to the heart for the voice of warning.

And then consider one thing more—*your leisure.* I now speak of females living at home with their parents, and not necessitated to earn their support by their own labor. Your time, except that which is put in requisition by a judicious mother for her assistance in household matters, is all your own. Your brothers, whether at home or abroad, must of

necessity be much engaged in business. *Their* time is scarcely at their own command; and too often this is felt, or at any rate pleaded, as an excuse for neglecting the claims of religion—the salvation of the soul. *You* have no such excuse. Your time is so much at command that you can walk, or read, or work, or visit, at will. Yes, you have so much leisure, that to get rid of time, which sometimes hangs heavy on your hand, some of you, I fear, squander hours a day upon useless labors of fancy and taste. You, of all persons in our world, are the last who can say they have no time to think of eternity—no opportunity to seek for salvation. Is it possible you should overlook your present *happy freedom from solicitude* of almost every kind? You will, perhaps, at once think of the apostle's words: "There is a difference between a wife and a virgin; the unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband"—1 Cor. vii. 34. How much of instruction, warning, and advice is there in these few words. The apostle did not intend to say what all unmarried females actually *do;* alas! we know that too many of them do not care to please the Lord; but his meaning is, that in the absence of all the solicitudes of a wife, a mother, and a mistress, they have a most favorable opportunity to attend to the things that belong to the soul. Ah, young woman, you can perhaps form some idea of what awaits you by seeing what has

come upon the head, the heart, and the hands of your mother. With the most judicious domestic arrangements, and a mind happily freed from excessive care and troublous thoughts, how incessant are her cares, how exhausting of time, strength, and spirits, are her duties. She has no resting hours—no holiday seasons—no sabbatic leisure—but care, care, incessant care, is often *her* lot. Is this the time, and are these the circumstances, to which you would postpone the consideration of the high concern of religion? Is it amid such distractions of thought, and such perturbation of feeling, and such occupancy of time, you would begin the momentous pursuit of salvation, and the sacred duties of religion? Why the *real*, yea the *established* and eminent Christian woman finds it as much as she can do to keep alive her piety amid so many perplexities and demands. And will you *begin* it then? These remarks apply to all, even to those who have servants at command, but especially to those who have no such helps. Females of the laboring class, how, with a mother's duties, will *you* be able to commence a religious life, with your unshared and sleepless anxieties? Oh, let me say with an emphasis borrowed from what I have witnessed myself, "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth." Halcyon season, did you but know it! Improve it while it lasts.

Dwell, my female friends, upon these rich advantages placed by the order of Providence within your reach. And their practical value and tendency

are evident in their results. How else shall we account for it that so much larger a number of the disciples of Christ are found among your sex, than in the other? It is not, I repeat, that there is in religion that which it is said better suits the intellect of the weaker vessel than that of the stronger. This is a double insult, first of all to religion itself, as if it were adapted only to imbecility, and to you, as if that imbecility were yours. The circumstances I have just stated will account for it, without supposing either that your minds or the proofs of revealed religion are weak. Religion, which is the glory of an archangel, and the very image of God, can never be below the dignity of *man*, or unworthy the attention of the mightiest intellect. If religion depended upon authority, a thousand times more of lofty intellect has been arrayed on the side of Christianity than has been marshaled against it. In addition to the circumstances mentioned above, to account for the prevalence of piety among your sex, I might mention that it would seem as if God had intended it for the greater humiliation of Satan, that as he triumphed over man by woman, so God would triumph over *him* by woman—that as she was the instrument of his success in the fall, she should be the instrument of his humiliation in redemption; that she who was the first to come under his yoke, should be the most eager to throw it off, and thus his trophy be snatched from his hand; and his boast be rendered nugatory by the power of Him who came to bruise the serpent's head, and

to destroy the works of the devil. But there is another mark of the wisdom of God in this arrangement, which is, that as religion is so momentous to the interests of society and the welfare of immortal souls, the sex should be most inclined to it to which is consigned the first formation of the human character.

I will now set before you the BENEFITS which will accrue to you from early piety.

Are the blessings of religion itself nothing? For recollect, piety is not merely the performance of duties, but also the enjoyment of benefits. This is too much forgotten, and the whole business of a holy life is regarded by many in something of the light of penance; or at any rate of a service somewhat rigid and severe. If it *were* so, it would still be our wisdom to attend to it, since it is the only thing that can prepare us for heaven and eternity. That it *is* service, is very true; but it is also a state of privilege. It is the service not of a slave, but of a child; and with the duties of a child, it brings also the privileges of a child. You have all your sins pardoned—your persons accepted of God—your hearts renewed by regeneration, and yourselves brought into this new relation by adoption Dwell upon that one thought—a child of God! Can you conceive of any thing higher, greater, nobler? Is the relation of an angel superior? To be able to say in the fullest, richest sense of the language, "*Our* FATHER *which art in heaven*"—to be the object of divine love, care, interest—to be in a

ed in all the privileges of the divine, redeemed, and heavenly family! Oh, my young friends, is this nothing? Is it not every thing? Many of you are orphans, and is it not blissful to say, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up?" Is it not a blessed thing to have him for the guide of your youth? Hear what God says: "Wherefore, come out from among them, and I will be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." O hear his voice, accept his invitation, and come into his family! Hence it is we propose religion to you, not simply in the shape of *duty*, but of *bliss*. Yes. It is another name for happiness: and can you be happy too soon? You *want* to be happy. You are made for happiness, and are capable of it; and where will you find it? Pleasure saith, "It is not in me;" and knowledge saith, "It is not in me." Rank, fashion, and wealth affirm, "We have heard the fame thereof with our ears." But religion saith, "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the fountain, and take of the water of life freely." Universal experience attests that pure and full satisfaction is not to be found for the soul of man in any of the possessions of this world; and if they were satisfying, they are all uncertain; mere unsubstantial shadows, which flit before us and are lost. You have, perhaps, formed totally wrong conceptions of religion. "Happiness," you say, "in religion! We can conceive of it as *duty*—somewhat severe, though incumbent duty; but to

speak of religion yielding pleasure, is like supposing the entrance of a ghost would increase the delights of a ball-room." Yes, I know it is in your imagination, or at least of some of you, a spectral form, muffled, sullen, and gloomy; frightening the young by its awful look, petrifying them by its icy touch, and casting over them its own gloomy shadow. Ah, no, you mistake it. On the contrary, it is a seraph from the presence of God, lighting on our orb, clad in robes of celestial beauty, radiant with beams of glory, shedding smiles of joy on this dark scene, and echoing the angels' song, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will to men." That ministering spirit meets you, my female friends, just setting out in life, offers to be your guide, protector, and comforter, through all your perilous journey to eternity. Hear her voice as she beckons you to follow her: "If you are in danger, I will shield you; if you are desolate, I will befriend you; if you are poor, I will enrich you; if you are sorrowful, I will comfort you; if you are sick, I will visit you; in the dangerous walks of life, I will protect you; in the agonies of death, I will sustain you; and then, when your spirit quits its clay tabernacle, I will conduct you into the presence of God, where there is fullness of joy, and place you at his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore." And *will* you refuse such a friend? Will you turn away from such bliss? Religion, gloom, and melancholy! Yes, if Eden was a gloomy place. Yes

if heaven be a region of sighs and tears. Yes, if saints made perfect and holy angels are clad in sackcloth, and the song of the seraphim is changed into the groan of despair. Oh, no, "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Her duties are pleasant—her very sorrows are mixed with joys—to say nothing of her privileges.

Perhaps I may suggest, without at all intending to utter a suspicion of your regard to virtue, or a reflection upon your firm attachment to its rules, that you may need religion in youth, to protect you from the moral dangers to which even females are exposed. A vicious woman, I have already admitted, is a much rarer character than a vicious man; but still it sometimes occurs. What could not the records of some institutions reveal of this nature? How many victims of the tempter's wiles could there be found, who would have been preserved from degradation and misery had they been found under the protecting influence of religion, when the assault was made upon their purity or honesty. I know that multitudes are kept strictly chaste and upright without religion; but I know that of the numbers which have fallen, not one would have lapsed if they had been living in the fear of God. After Eve's fall in Paradise from perfect innocence, no woman should feel offended by the admonition to be cautious and vigilant; nor suppose that her situation, her feelings, or her principles, so place her beyond the reach of temptation, that her safety is guaranteed with absolute certainty.

"Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." To many a once high-minded woman, proud of her reputation, the taunt has been uttered by the victims of frailty, "Art thou also become weak as we?" "Be not high-minded, then, but fear."

But you need religion *for your consolation amid the sorrows of your lot.* If it be truly said of man, that he "is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward," it may with greater emphasis be so said of woman. As if in the way of righteous retribution, she who mixed the bitter cup of human woe is called to drink the deepest of its dregs. Sorrows are apportioned to her sex in common with ours, and there is scarcely an affliction to which humanity is incident to which she is not herself exposed. In addition, how many has she peculiar to herself? The weaker vessel, she is liable to be oppressed by the stronger; and to what an extent is this oppression carried on! How is she trodden down, not only in countries where the protective influence of Christianity is not known, but in this where it is? To how much greater bodily infirmity is her more delicately wrought and fragile frame subjected, than ours? Dwell upon her dependence, and in many cases her helplessness. To me the situation of some single, friendless women is the very type of desolation. Then think of her privations, her sufferings, her cares, her labors, as a mother. I admire the patience, the contentment, the submission, which enable her, without repining, to say, "I am a

woman," and not complain of the hardness of her lot; for certain it is, that her groans are loudest in those of creation. Think not, my young friends, I am scaring you into religion, by filling your minds with these gloomy forebodings. By no means; but I *am* anxious to prepare you by the sweet, soothing, tranquilizing, and mollifying power of religion, to meet a woman's trials by a woman's piety. It is piety alone which can lighten the cross. This only can inspire that passive fortitude which to you is more essential than active strength. And surely religion never appears more lovely, more mighty, more sublime, than when it suppresses the groan of despair, and keeps alight the last ray of hope in the most depressed circumstances—when it stifles the cry of pain, and wipes the drops of anguish from the sufferer's brow—when it imparts a martyr's courage to the gentlest spirit—when, as we said in the last discourse, it teaches woman to bend like the bulrush in submission to the stream of sorrow, and then to rise in fortitude and faith from the pressure of the wave. Religion will not avert the cup of sorrow from woman, nor change her lot; but it will somewhat sweeten the bitterness of the one, and soften the hardness of the other.

Early religion will prepare you above all things for USEFULNESS. Young women, would you set out in life without a wish, a purpose, an aim to be *useful?* Can you be so destitute of all benevolence, ambition, and nobleness of spirit, as not to desire to do good? I am aware that without piety

you may do much to bless your species, but with it how much *more* may you not do? As this, however, will be the subject of a future sermon, I shall not enlarge upon it here further than to say, that religion gives the greatest power, and strongest disposition, and most adequate qualifications for usefulness, that can be possessed on earth, both in single and in wedded life. A truly, fervently, and consistently religious woman, *must be* a benefactress of her species.

Early piety is at once the *most secure basis* and the *most complete finish of* ALL *female excellence.* Look over what is said in a previous sermon on "Woman's Mission," and the virtues and tenderness that qualify her to fulfill it, and think what a support to all these is furnished by sincere piety. The surest basis of all moral excellence will be found here. What is so productive of humility—of meekness and gentleness—of contentment and submission—and of self-denial and fortitude? Where, in what soil, will these mild and yet heroic dispositions grow and flourish so luxuriantly as in that of piety? We have stated that woman is created to love and be beloved. To love is natural to her; and what cherishes this state of mind like religion, which both in its doctrines and duties is one bright and glorious manifestation of love to the universe? To all these varied excellences religion adds the firmness and consistency of principle, the power and government of conscience, and takes them out of the region of mere taste. And then what a

holy and ineffable loveliness does it throw over the female character! Beauty is woman's attribute, and her form, when seen in more than usual charms, is the most perfect type of exquisite symmetry to be found in the whole material universe. And if woman's form be the finest specimen of material beauty, woman's piety is the most attractive instance of that which is moral. Who can look upon the well-executed pictorial representations of this, as seen in paintings and engravings, without admiration? Where does woman look so *altogether* lovely as when seen lifting the eye of devotion to heaven—that eye in which faith, hope, and love seem all to mingle and express their emotions? The Church of Rome has known the power of this, and has maintained its dominion in some measure over its votaries, by the power of the painter's art in depicting female beauty associated with female piety. In a religious *female*, the beauty of heaven and earth combines; the graces of the seraph and those of the daughters of Adam are united: just as in a holy man the sublimer grandeur of mortals and immoratals is found associated. Piety then is the last and finest polish of female excellence. My young friends, may this be yours!

Yet, notwithstanding all this, many of you are *not* pious. Do consider what a chasm in excellence remains to be filled up—what a defect to be supplied—while religion is wanting in the female character. A womar may as well be without heart as without religion; and there are few men, how

ever irreligious themselves, but would shrink from impiety in her: it involves a coldness and hardness of character offensive both to taste and feeling. "Even when infidelity was more in vogue than at present, when it had almost monopolized talent, and identified itself with enlightened sentiment, the few women who volunteered under its banner were treated with the contempt they deserved. The female Quixote broke her lance in vindicating the 'Rights of Women;' and no one sympathized with her in her defeat. And depend upon it, whatever other female follows Mary Wolstencroft, and essays the emancipation of her sex from the obligations of piety, will, like her, be consigned to abhorrence by the verdict of society. The mere suspicion of irreligion lowers a woman in general esteem. Religion is indeed woman's panoply, and no one who wishes her happiness would divest her of it; no one who appreciates her virtues would weaken their best security."* What is it then that prevents your giving to the subject of religion that attention which its infinite and eternal importance demands and deserves? Let me ask you with a beseeching importunity, as the apostle did the Galatians, "Who (or what) did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" Ah! what? Let me speak to you of the HINDRANCES that are in the way of your obtaining life eternal. Hindrances! Should

* "Woman, in her Social and Domestic Character," by Mrs. John Sandford; a work so judicious, so Christian, and so elegant, that it can not be too strongly recommended.

aught but absolute impossibilities prevent you? It is not infidelity. No. You are not infidels. You shudder at the idea. A female infidel is a character as rare as it is odious. Nor is it absolute irreligion, but the negative character of *no* religion that we have most to complain of. Not a direct opposition to its claims, but the neglect of them for other things. It is that guilty apathy to the most momentous subject in the universe; that careless indifference to the most valuable interests of time and eternity; that fatal oblivion of all that belongs to another world, which we regret; that contentment with things seen and temporal, without any solicitude about things unseen and eternal, that we deplore. Your minds are pre-occupied. You are taken up with other things and say to religion when it appeals to you, "Go thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." There is, I know, a repugnance to true, spiritual, vital, earnest piety, which is the natural working of an unrenewed heart. You can observe the Sabbath-day forms of godliness by attending the house of God; but even this is more from custom than from choice—a kind of weekly compromise with piety, for so much Sabbath occupation to be left to yourselves and other pursuits all the rest of the week. Your religion is nothing more than a Sunday dress, worn for the place and the season. But this is *not* religion, but merely a substitute and an apology for it.

Some of you are bent upon *present worldly enjoy-*

ment. The apostle has described your taste and your pursuits where he says, "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." Ponder that descrip tion. Does it not startle you—horrify you? Lovers of parties—of the dance and the song; of the gay scene and frivolous discourse—*more than God.* Just look at this thought in all its naked deformity. A ball, a concert, a route, a party—*loved more than God!* Not to love God for higher objects than these—for science, literature, fame, rank, wealth, is a dreadful state of mind; but to neglect and despise God for scenes of frivolity, mirth, and conviviality, is it not shocking? Did you ever yet seriously reflect thus: "What a soul I must have that can love pleasure, but can not love God!" Consider, what will this taste for pleasure do for you in the hour of sickness; in the scenes of poverty; the season of tribulation, or the agonies of death?

In the case of some of those who possess a more than ordinary degree of personal attraction, *the consciousness of beauty* fills the mind with self-complacency, and a constant thirst for the admiration and attention of others. No really elegant woman *can* be ignorant of her natural accomplishments; and too rarely is a beautiful mind the lowly tenant of a beautiful body. What an odious spectacle is presented when mind and matter are thus exhibited in contrast. What beauty can compare with that of the soul, and what beauty of the soul can compare with that of holiness? This is the beauty of

angels; yea, of God himself. How foolish is it to be vain of that which a cutaneous eruption may turn into loathsome deformity, and which, if sickness do not destroy it at once, advancing age must obliterate, and the grave consume. Many a woman, even in this world, has had to rue the possession of a captivating face or form, and to deplore it forever in the world to come. Body and soul, character and happiness, have in thousands of instances been all sacrificed on the altar and at the shrine of beauty. Oh, my female friends, take heed you are not thus ruined!

Vanity displays itself also in *attention to personal decoration*, even where there is no pretension to beauty, and not unfrequently attempts to supply the want of it. How many are a thousand times more concerned about jewelry than religion—the pearl of great price; and about millinery than about the robe of righteousness and the garments of salvation. A love of dress is not only a foible and a fault, but almost a vice, and in innumerable cases has led to it. Is it not lamentable to conceive of a rational and immortal being spending her time and exhausting her solicitude in adorning her body and caring nothing about the ornaments of her soul; thinking only how she shall appear in the eyes of man, but caring nothing how she shall appear in the eyes of God? Consider how soon that gay attire must be exchanged for the shroud, and those glittering ornaments for corruption, earth, and worms. A mind taken up with such vanities can not attend

to the sanctities of religion, or the realities of eternity.

With this is too often associated *a levity and frivolity of disposition* which are the very opposite to that seriousness and sobriety of mind, which a real regard to spiritual religion requires. There is no sin in cheerfulness; no piety in gloom. Religion is the happiest thing in the world, for it is, in fact, the beginning of heaven upon earth. The woman without a smile, and the man without a tear, are neither of them a person to my taste. Religion gives a peace that passeth all understanding, and yields a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory; so that we wish you to understand, my young friends, we do not require you in becoming Christians to take the veil; cut off your tresses; doff your comely raiment; part with your smiles; and clothe yourself like a specter in the gloom, and maintain the sullen silence of the convent. But religion *is* still a serious thing; a thing that deals with God, salvation, heaven, eternity! And surely the frivolity and the levity that can do nothing but laugh, and rattle, and court attention by studied airs, empty loquacity, and personal display, are utterly incompatible with that dignified, and chastened, yet by no means formal, much less gloomy, sobriety of mind which religion requires.

Companionship hinders many from giving their attention to this momentous subject. They are surrounded by associates who have no taste for religion; and they have, perhaps, formed a still

closer friendship with some one or more who unhappily manifest little or no inclination for this high and holy concern. From the spell of such a circle, it is difficult indeed to break away. It has been thought and said by some, that the influence of female companionship, both for good and for evil, is even greater than that of the other sex; from a supposition that there is less of robust independence and of self-reliance in woman than in man. If so, how much does it become every female to take care what companions she selects. How difficult is it to oppose the spirit and conduct of those with whom we act. Generally speaking, we must conform or secede. Even if a solicitude about religion is in some degree awakened, it will soon be checked and extinguished in the society of those who have no sympathy with such anxiety. Shall the dearest friends you have on earth keep you from salvation? Will you sacrifice your soul, your immortal soul, at the shrine of friendship? Will you refuse to go to heaven because others will not accompany you; and will you go with them to perdition rather than part company on earth? Will you carry your friendship so far as to be willing to be friends even in the bottomless pit?

You are perhaps prejudiced against religion by *the conduct of some of its professors.* I am sorry there is any ground for this. I admit that much you see in many of them has but little in it to recommend religion to your favor. And it may be that some of your own age and sex are included in

this number. But all this was foretold by Christ, must be expected as human nature is, and ought not to be allowed to prejudice your minds against piety. If you saw a number of persons under a course of medical treatment which required them to observe a particular regimen, and which they constantly violated, and were, of course, no better for the medicines they took, you would not reject the system because it did not cure *them*. Just so it is with religion. These persons, though they profess to be under it, are constantly violating its rules, and are no better than those who do not profess it. But is this a valid reason for rejecting the system? You are to try religion by its own nature, as set forth in the Bible, and not by the conduct of its professors. If your soul should be lost, it will be no excuse before the bar of God, nor any comfort to yourselves in the world of despair, that you suffered your mind to be prejudiced against religion by the misconduct of some who professed it.

And now, in conclusion of this already too long discourse, let me, young women, conjure you at the outset of life to consider the great end and purpose for which, as regards yourselves, your Great Creator placed you in this world. Think not too highly of yourselves, for you are sinners as well as others, and need, and may obtain, the salvation that is in Jesus Christ, with eternal glory. Think not too meanly of yourselves, for you are immortal creatures, and may inherit everlasting life. Rise to the true dignity of your nature by rising into the region

of true religion. Consume not your life in pursuits, innocent it may be, but frivolous and unworthy of your powers, your destiny, and your duty. With a clear and right understanding of your mission as regards this world, connect as clear a perception of your mission as regards the world to come. Behold an existence opening before you, which you may fill with the sanctity, and bliss, and honor of a Christian, as well as with all the virtues of a woman. Withdraw your heart from vanity, and consecrate it to piety. Give the morning of your day to God, and then, whether it be long or short; whether it be passed away in wedded or in single life; whether it be be bright with the sun of prosperity, or dark with the clouds and stormy with the winds of adversity; whether it shall close suddenly by one of those visitations to which your sex is peculiarly exposed, or shall be drawn out to a long and somewhat gloomy decline, it shall usher in, for your happy spirit delivered from the burden of the flesh, that cloudless and eternal morning to which there shall be no night. Then shall it be found that THE CHIEF END OF WOMAN, AS WELL AS MAN, WAS TO GLORIFY GOD AND ENJOY HIM FOREVER.

APPENDIX.

One morning I paid a pastoral visit to a young lady, a member of my church, whose family had not long removed from another part of the country to reside in Birmingham On my rising to retire, my young friend informed me that she had an invalid sister, whom she expected every moment from her chamber, and who, she said, would be much gratified to see me. I had scarcely resumed my seat, before there entered the room a most lovely and interesting young person, whose features, naturally extremely pleasing, derived additional beauty from the fatal hectic with which they were a little flushed, and which had been increased by the exertion of coming down stairs. * * As soon as Martha, for such was her Christian name, had recovered her breath, which had been rendered short and rather difficult by the exertion of descending from her chamber, I entered into conversation with her on the circumstances of her affliction; a subject which, though in most cases gloomy and depressing, checked not for a moment the sweet smile which played upon her engaging countenance. She soon informed me that she felt she had the sentence of death in herself, and considered her illness as a voice from the tomb; and spoke of dying as one that was familiar with the awful topic. "I have neither love of life," she said, "nor fear of death: and although I am leaving the world when its prospects were become most flattering and alluring, I do not regret it; I have only one desire, and that is after more communion with God." There was a tear in her eyes, but it was not the tear of disappointed hope, or bitter regret, but only the tribute of nature, refined, but not destroyed by grace, and which, in fact, added a charm to the beauties of holiness, that so evidently invested her char

acter. The whole strain of her conversation was so calm, so collected, so dignified, evincing such meek submission, such humble piety, such weanedness from the world, and such longing after immortality, that I gazed at her with wonder and delight, and left the house thinking and saying that I had scarcely ever witnessed any thing so seraphic. * * *

Martha had been declining in health for some time; but on the eleventh of May last, on returning from public worship, she ruptured a blood-vessel in the lungs. * * This attack of disease she received as an intimation that she must be ready for the speedy coming of the Son of Man. Among her private memoranda she had made the following entry relative to the event: "This dispensation of mercy brought eternity to my view, and in the evening I had the sweet assurance that sudden death could have nothing to alarm me." How strange will it sound to many to hear a young and beautiful woman, with all the ordinary, and some of the extraordinary reasons for wishing to live, talk of an event which would in all probability issue in death, as a dispensation of *mercy*. Yet this was neither unnatural nor irrational. All things work together for good to them that love God; and *death* is placed by the apostle among the privileges of the child of God. * * *

At the time of her attack in May, she was engaged in the bonds of plighted love to a gentleman to whom she was tenderly attached, and to whom at no distant period she was to have been married. It is in vain to suppose that she could turn from the altar to the tomb, as an object of contemplation, and from this dearest of all friends to the arrest of the last enemy, without a severe struggle between an earthly and a spiritual affection. The conflict was short, the victory complete; and it was at once the greatest effort and brightest triumph of her faith, to be made willing to give up even this dear object of her heart, and to depart to be with Christ. In reference to this event she sometimes said, "It is mysterious, but I know it is all right

My Heavenly Father knows what is best for me." "I never," says her sister, "saw greater firmness in her, than when she adverted to this disappointment of her hopes."

As I did not apprehend from my first visit that her end was near, and as I was much from home, I did not again see her for some time: and O that all my young friends could have seen her as I then saw her, lovely in death, like a moss-rose bud nearly severed from its stock, and just ready to fall on the ground, with its opening beauties possessing still their freshness and their fragrance! There was not the shadow of a shade of impatience, anxiety, or fear, to becloud her beautiful countenance, to check the smile which irradiated her features, or to dim the ray of hope which glittered in her fine, expressive eye, as it turned to that heaven whither her heart had already ascended. What painter's skill could pencil the looks which I then saw? All was peace and more than peace: it was a peace that passeth understanding, rising into a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Christ, and Christ alone, was her refuge; and she confessed her exclusive dependence on his blood and righteousness for acceptance with God. She knew in whom she had believed, and was persuaded he was able to keep that which she had committed to him until the day of Christ. I pass over much that was said during that most solemn and delightful interview, to mention one remark: "Do you now feel any regret," I said to her, "that you are leaving the world so early, and when its prospects were becoming so attractive?" With an ineffable smile, she replied, "*Our great business in this world is to obtain the salvation of our souls; and having secured that, I have accomplished the end of my existence.*" Glorious and immortal truth! Mighty sentiment! * * *

A time was fixed for a last sad interview with her once intended husband. In this scene her faith shone forth in all its brightness, and patience had its perfect work. While all around were filled with poignant grief, *she* was calm, serene, *composed*. Having affectionately uttered some

[illegible] to the front of her house, and pointed [illegible] to that heaven on the verge of which we saw her; she took her last farewell, and gave her last look with a tranquility and fortitude that surprised every one, and which proved that she was now enjoying the [illegible] of the "[illegible] glory" to suffer [illegible] from the sending of any earthly [illegible] whatever. She looked up into heaven, and saw Jesus waiting to receive her spirit, and felt that she would have for Him, even that friend with whom it was once her fondest worldly hope to tread the path of life in company. The scene scarcely suffered her pause, or drew from her cool one lingering lingering look to earth, for heaven was fully in her view.

* * *

"In the midst of sufferings, too painful to describe," said her sister in a note, "Martha would smile, and tell us Jesus was near to her. Her countenance, at all times animated and happy, was unusually so now; it beamed with ineffable brightness, and was a strong and beautiful evidence that all was perfect peace within. When she could no longer articulate, she looked all we could wish her to say. About five minutes before she expired, her agonies ceased—she recognized all of us—and, as though to bid a last farewell, she smiled, and exclaimed, 'Happy, happy!' Blessed state of mind, to smile and exclaim, Happy, happy, even in the cold arms of death.

So died Martha S. Her last farewell to earth was uttered with the consciousness and the feeling that she was treading at that moment upon the very threshold of heavenly glory: and who then need wonder that she could speak of happiness even in dissolution. As she drew near her everlasting home, she saw the lights of her Father's house, and unconscious of the gloom of the dark valley of the shadow of death, from the midst of which she beheld them, she gave expression to her feelings in a note of holy rapture, and left the world with accents which we may easily imagine were also the first she uttered as she touched the heavenly shore, "Happy! happy!"

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Behold, young people, another convincing proof and beautiful display of the power and excellence of religion, in the deep submission, the solid peace, the joyful content of this young lady, when called not only to resign life in the very morning of her day, but to turn from the altar to the tomb

Female Religious Zeal.

"Those women which labored with me in the gospel."—PHILIPPIANS iv. 3

THE subject on which I am to address you this morning harmonizes with the scenes which we have lately witnessed in the metropolis of our country, and which, indeed, are scarcely yet over—I mean the missionary and other religious meetings, which are held at this season of the year in that great center of the world's family. The month of May is wisely selected for the time of holding the anniversaries of these organizations of Christian zeal. Then, when the principle of fertility, after the dreariness of another winter, is flowing in a thousand channels, and when all nature, in this country, is verdant and blossoming with the hopes of another year, it is well for the Church of Christ to exhibit those institutions which are, in the moral world, the vernal signs of retiring frosts and approaching summer. It is a glorious sight to behold the trooping multitudes hastening with willing feet, and joyful countenances, and beating hearts, to the place of convocation, and blending all the joys of friendly

greetings with all the sublimer delights of Christian zeal. We feel called upon, there, to bless God, not only that we live in a world which he has visited in mercy by the person and work of his incarnate Son, but in an age and country in which so much is done for the spread of the knowledge of this great fact to the ends of the earth. At these meetings all is matter of delight. The crowded platforms, containing the pastors, deacons, and members of our churches, who have connected themselves with the missionary society; the presence of missionaries from the fields of holy labor; the eloquent addresses of the speakers; the vast crowd of listening hearers; the thunders of eloquence reverberated in other thunders of applause; all, all, are calculated to make one feel how happy an exchange we have made in giving up the pleasures of sin and the world for those of religion. But there is one other sight, on these occasions, which is as delightful as it is common; and that is, the number of women, and especially of *young* women, that are always present; thus reminding us how deep an interest they have in these proceedings, and how large a share they bear in them. We do not adopt the world's vocabulary, and talk of the beautiful and elegantly dressed females that are there; we would rather speak of "the *holy* women," like one apostle, and refer to them as another apostle does in the text, as "those women which labored in the gospel." And, indeed, without going to the metropolis in the month of May, or witnessing the

scenes of Exeter Hall, what public convocation for any religious object is ever held in our own, or any other town, of which women are not far the larger portion?

But let us attend to what the text says. "Help those women that labored with me in the gospel." Then women *may* labor in the gospel, for they did in apostolic times, and received the commendation of the apostle for so doing. If they did then, they may now; and if they may, they ought. Hard would be woman's lot, bitter her privation, and degraded her condition, if, on account of her sex, she was excluded from all participation, beyond her own personal religion, in the sublimest enterprise in the universe. She might well deplore her misfortune, if, while *man* was permitted the exercise of religious zeal, *she* was denied all service at the altar of God. "Even heathenism," she would mournfully exclaim, "honored our sex, as it was represented by the Vestals, to whose vigilance was committed the guardianship of the sacred fire; and by its priestesses, to whose inspiration was intrusted the responses of the oracles. And does the religion of Jesus exclude us?" No, it does not, and we refer you back to our first two sermons for proof that it does not; and we call your attention in the present one, to learn how you may avail yourselves of the honor placed within your reach, and discharge the obligations you are under to promote the interests of religion in this dark, disordered world.

To be useful in the cause of God! How noble, how vast, how sublime, how godlike an idea! Dwell for a moment upon it. Did you ever weigh the import of that very common, but very delightful word, USEFULNESS! Did you ever ponder in sober seriousness of thought the cognate phrase, "To BE USEFUL?" Have you never had your admiration excited by hearing it said of any one, "She is a *useful* woman?" I can not let you hear or read another syllable till I have endeavored to fascinate you, if possible, by the beauty, and to captivate you by the force of that glorious word, USEFULNESS. Look at its opposite, use*lessness*. How low, and dull, and mean a sound; and how despicable the character it represents. A rational, social, and immortal being, useless—doing no good—carrying on no benevolent activity—exerting no beneficial influence—a worthless weed, and not a flower—a pebble of the desert on the shore, and not a gem—a piece of dead wood floating down the stream, instead of a living fruit-tree growing on its banks. Yea, worse than all these; for weeds, stones, and rotten wood may be converted to some good purpose; but to what purpose can one who does no good be turned, except it be to serve as a warning to others? May I be successful in working into your mind and heart, memory and conscience, that mighty term which I have placed before you, and inspire you with an abhorrence of being use*less*, and an ambition to be use*ful*. Let your young hearts beat with a desire to do good. Aspire to

the honor of doing good. Contract not, shrivel not into a despicable selfishness. Cherish a yearning after benevolent activity, and feel as if it were but half living to live only for yourselves.

In this cause, I want you to be even *zealous*. The apostle says, "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing." Zeal, as you know, means an earnest, ardent desire, giving rise to a correspondent energy of action, to obtain some favorite object; and when directed to a *right* object is a noble and elevated state of mind. It is, however, a state of mind that requires great caution as to its management, especially in the young, and, most of all, in young *females*. It is like fire, which may be applied to many useful purposes when under proper direction, but which, if not kept in its proper place, and under proper restraint, may cause a conflagration. Or, to change the illustration, it may be only as the healthful vital heat which keeps the body in comfort and in action, or it may become a fever of the soul, to consume its strength and destroy its life. Or, to venture, for the sake of emphasis, even upon a third illustration, many a zealous mind is set on fire by the speed of its own action, and for want of some regulator to check its speed, and some lubricator to lessen its friction, ignites into a flame that consumes the whole machine, and does mischief to others as well as to itself. A warm heart requires a cool judgment to prevent these consequences from a misguided zeal. The female mind, being so susceptible, is perhaps

far more liable to incautious action than that of the opposite sex, and is less disposed to reflection. In man, the judgment more generally keeps the heart in check till it is itself enlightened and convinced. In woman, the heart often is engaged before the judgment; and hence the danger of female zeal being sometimes wrong in its object, excessive in its degree, and impetuous in its action. Almost all new theories, whether relating to medicine, theology, or any other practical matters, find favor first of all chiefly with women. Too often led more by their feelings than their reason, they get entangled, like their first mother, by appeals to their passions and affections, and allow their hearts to lead astray their judgment. Hence, I say to you, endeavor to enter into the spirit of the apostle's exhortation, where he enjoins the ancient matrons to "teach the young women to be sober-minded."

The Greek philosophers classed zeal under three heads—the zeal of *envy*, the zeal of *emulation*, and the zeal of *piety*. Extinguish all feelings of the first, as so many sparks thrown off from a flame kindled by the fire of the bottomless pit. Have very little to do beyond an *unenvious* imitation of what is good, with the second—and let the third be put under the guardianship of a sound judgment and the guidance of Holy Scripture.

I will first of all advert to the OBJECTS of your zealous activity. You dwell in a vale of tears, and amid the groans of creation, occasioned by poverty, disease, misfortune, and death, and are not to

be insensible to the sights and sounds of affliction by which you are surrounded. The female heart is supposed to be the very dwelling-place of mercy, and an unfeeling woman is a libel upon her sex: formed by nature to weep with those that weep, and to minister, as we showed in a former sermon, to the bodily woes of humanity, enter into the design of Providence, and become a ministering angel in the chamber of sickness. You have seen those cloaked and demure women who issue from a conventual establishment in the neighborhood of this town, on errands of mercy to the abodes of sickness and poverty, deeming no office too menial, no service too self-denying to be performed, which can alleviate the pains or promote the comfort of the sufferer. We would not question the purity of their motives or the tenderness of those offices which they perform for the children of want and woe; but it looks, after all, like a shallow device of the church which employs them to obtrude itself on public notice and to win converts to itself. We call upon you, without cutting the ties of your connection with society and abjuring all pretensions to the character of wife and mother, to be *our* Sisters of Mercy, and to make it your business and your pleasure to visit the scenes of sickness and the abodes of poverty. Even in youth, acquire the habits, the tenderness, the delicate tact of a nurse. Loathe that spurious sentimentality which can weep over the imaginary woes of a novel, but turns away either with a callous or a coward heart from those real sufferings

which abound on every hand. But I now more particularly refer to zeal *for* religion, as well as that which is manifested under its potency for any other legitimate object.

Religion is every one's business, not only as regards the possession and practice of it as a personal concern, but also as regards its *diffusion*. Every one can be truly pious, and can do something, by the blessing of God, to make others so. To spread religion in our world is not merely the work and duty of its ministers, but of all without exception, whether young or old, rich or poor, learned or illiterate, male or female. Every one who understands the nature, feels the influence, and values the privileges of the gospel of Christ, can do something in order to bring others into the same happy condition. Where there are no desire and effort to do this, there can be no real piety. None have any right to conclude they are in a state of salvation who have no concern for the salvation of others. Indifference to the eternal welfare of our fellow-creatures is a certain proof of indifference to our own. There *is* room, and opportunity, and obligation, for all to work in this cause. Even children can do something here, and have done it. A little girl being deeply affected by the notorious violation of the Sabbath in the neighborhood where she lived, which she noticed in the number of shops that were opened on the Lord's day, went to her minister and solicited some tracts on the subject, which, being inclosed in a neat envelope, she took round and mod-

estly left at the different shops without saying a word. And as the result of this humble and unostentatious effort, seven shops from that time were closed on the Sabbath. God sometimes employs the humblest instruments for accomplishing great purposes, as we observed in one of the last sermons, when remarking upon the conduct of the little Hebrew maid in Naaman's family. Paganism teaches us something here; for what said Jehovah to the prophet, when referring to the heathen practices which the Jews had imitated? "Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods"—Jer. vii. 17, 18. What a busy scene! all minds engaged—all hands employed—men, women, and children. Let us be instructed by this bad example, and show a zeal for the true God equal to that which those apostate Jews did for the false ones. Christianity can find work for women and children as well as Paganism; and how solemn are the obligations it imposes on all who profess it, to propogate it.

But as no service can be well peformed by those who are not qualified for it, I will here enumerate the chief PRE-REQUISITES for a course of female activity in the cause of religion.

Religious zeal should, in every case, be the offspring of *personal piety*. Without this there can

be no intelligent, well-sustained, or very efficient effort. Something, no doubt, may be accomplished without this. God *may* honor labors which were never truly directed to his glory. But it is only the truly pious mind that can understand the object of religious zeal, be actuated by right motives, be likely long to continue the work, or bring down the blessing of God upon what is done. Your own heart must be right with God, or you will know little about the way of making others so. Example must support exhortation, or the latter will have little effect. Much of the effort of the present day is sadly wanting in devout seriousness, spiritual earnestness, and holy solemnity. It is a bustling, prayerless, unsanctified activity. There is often a frivolity about it that looks as if those who were engaged in it knew not, or forgot, that they were doing the work of the Lord; all is so light and frivolous that it is evident, in this case, zeal is only another species of amusement. The zeal that is likely to be continuous, to honor God, to do good to our fellow-creatures, is that which is cherished in the closet of devotion, fed by the oil of Scripture, and fanned by the breath of prayer. There is, upon the minds of those who manifest it, "that awe which warns them how they touch a holy thing."

Religious *knowledge* is essential to well-directed efforts to do good. I now more particularly refer to a knowledge of the object to be accomplished, and the means of accomplishing it. A young per

son, anxious to do spiritual good, should well understand three great principles in religion—the ruin of human nature by sin—its redemption by Christ—and its regeneration by the Spirit; and should consider that all efforts of zeal must be directed to the accomplishment of the two latter. To fit her for this work, she should study well the Word of God, read some of the many treatises on the subject of religion, with which the press teems, and make herself acquainted with some of the best tracts and books for putting into the hands of those who become anxious about religion.

An intense and longing desire to be useful must lie at the bottom of all her efforts. It is not a mere love of activity—a taste for social union and occupation—a desire for power and influence over others—an ambition for distinction, that is the impulse of religious activity, but a tender pity for the immortal souls of our fellow-creatures, an earnest solicitude for their salvation, coupled with an enlightened and fervent zeal for the glory of God. It is the piety that melted the heart of David when he said, "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes because they keep not thy law;" and which agitated the soul of Paul the apostle, when amid the splendors of Athenian architecture and sculpture, he was insensible to all the glory that surrounded him, in consequence of the sin with which it was associated, and felt his spirit moved within him at seeing the city "wholly given to idolatry:" and which, indeed, is taught in the first three petitions of our Lord's

Prayer: "Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Understand, my young friends, then, what you have to do—not the work of a low and narrow sectarianism, in proselyting persons from one denomination to another; nothing resembling the operations of female Jesuitism; nothing of zeal to establish one denomination upon the ruins of another: no, but the nobler and holier work of saving the souls of your fellow-creatures, especially those of your own sex, from the dominion of sin here, and from the wrath to come hereafter. Begin life with an abhorrence of bigotry, and never let your zeal degenerate into the meanness and malignity of that earth-born spirit; let it be a fire kindled by a coal taken, by the seraphim, from the altar of God, and not a flame lighted by a scintillation from the bottomless pit. Be it *your* aim to spread that religion which consists not in forms of government and religious ceremonies, but of faith in Christ, and love to God, and love to man. To accomplish this, let there be real engagement of the heart. Give up your soul to the passion for being useful. Cherish the most expansive benevolence. Feel as if you did not understand, or secure, or enjoy, the end of life, unless you live to be useful. Account usefulness the charm of existence; the sugar that sweetens the cup of life. Ever feel as if you heard a voice saying to you, "Do something; do it at once; do it heartily; do good—*this* good—good to the soul."

A habit of *self-denial* is essential to the exercise of religious zeal and Christian benevolence. Our Lord said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." This is true of the way of holiness, but it is especially so in that of benevolent activity. Christ could do us no good without his cross; nor can we do others much good without ours. We would not deceive you, and endeavor to lure you into the career of holy activity by representing it as leading through a garden of Eden, where all is blooming and beautiful, ease and enjoyment. No such thing. The course of religious zeal is often in a wilderness, over sharp stones and bare rocks, and amid thorns and nettles. You must make sacrifices of time, ease, enjoyment, feeling, perhaps of friendships; you must bear hardship, and encounter many disagreeable things; you must be prepared to give up self-will, pertinacity, claims to pre-eminence. Can you be zealous of good works on such terms? If so, come on; if not, go back; for the career of mercy is not for such tender feet as yours to tread. But, my young friends, can you allow yourselves to sink into such effeminacy and feebleness of character? Can you be content to degenerate into littleness, and pass through life as a species of nonentity, because you can not endure a noble self denial! I do not appeal to your love of romance. I would not set your imagination on fire, in order that you might offer up yourselves a burnt-offering to benevolence in the flames of enthusiasm. I do

not stimulate you to become heroines of mercy, and to set all the comforts of life at defiance. There *are* some who love the adventures of a career of active mercy. There is romance in every thing, even in pity. I want not this, but I do want to see young women practicing a sober self-denial, a judicious disregard of ease and comfort, in order to do good. Unite a masculine hardihood of endurance with a feminine tenderness of feeling, and delicacy of manner. Passive fortitude belongs to you.

Patience is another qualification for doing good. They that would accomplish this must not be weary in well-doing. There are many things to make them so—the neglect of others—opposition—disappointment—ingratitude—perhaps censure. They who expect to benefit their fellow-creatures with as much ease and as speedily as others do them injury, had better not make the attempt, for they are sure to fail. Scarcely any people in the world have more need of patience than they who set themselves to instruct the ignorance, to relieve the wants, to alleviate the sorrows, and to reform the vices of their fellow-creatures. See how this was illustrated in the history of our Lord. Consider how his benevolence was ever resisted by the malignity of those whom he sought to benefit. He lavished upon them his mercy, and they upon him their ingratitude. They refused his offers—rejected his invitations—misrepresented his actions—disbelieved his words—and misconstrued his motives. Never was so much goodness met with so much envenomed

opposition. Yet behold his patience. A thousandth part of the opposition which he met with would have exhausted the forbearance of an archangel; and yet he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself—gave them his tears when they had refused his miracles—shed for them his blood when they despised his tears—and bade his disciples to make to them the first proclamation of his grace, when they had even scoffed at his blood. Study the history of Christ, my young friends, for the purpose of seeing, next to your regard to it as the means of salvation, an example for you to imitate in the career of mercy. Follow him going about doing good, to teach you with what patience you should go and do likewise.

Many who are all ardor at starting, soon grow tired, because they do not find the course easy, reach not the goal at a bound, or are opposed in their way. It is a despicable, as well as pitiable sight, to behold a young person entering into the work of benevolence so confident and eager, as if she would surpass all others, and then almost at the first stage, when the novelty is over, and difficulties arise, and the expected flowers in the path do not appear—giving all up, and turning back to indolence, ease, and uselessness. On the contrary, it is a sight on which angels and God himself might look down with delight, to see another holding on her way, even in her humble career of benevolence, amid disappointment and opposition, persevering in her attempts to do good, and finding in the con-

sciousness of her aims and motives, and her knowledge of the excellence of her object, a sufficient inducement to persevere, though at present she reaps little else but discouragement and defeat.

A spirit of dependence upon God for success, united with a high sense of the importance and necessity of human effort, is essential to religious zeal. This gives a two-fold boldness of mind, and firmness of step; and makes us not only to be strong, as instruments, in ourselves, but also in the Lord and in the power of his might. What courage is derived in the career of benevolence from such a consideration as this: "I know I am seeking a good object by right means, and I will go in the strength of the Lord." Young women, even in your humble sphere and efforts to do good, a spirit of believing prayer, which, indeed, is the spirit in which every thing *should be* done, will bring the God of Angels to your help—the Lord of Hosts to your aid. Go forth with the consciousness that you are doing right, and with a belief that Omnipotence is by your side. It is not pride nor self-conceit, but that proper sense of capability which every one should cherish, to say, "I feel I *am* something, and can *do* something; I need not be a cipher, for God has not made me one. I have a mind, and heart, and will, and tongue, and with these I may do something for God and my fellow-creatures. Others of my own age and sex, feeble and humble as I am, *have* done something, and so may I, and by God's help and blessing I will." You are right—it is all true

This is not self-esteem, but only self-knowledge Cherish these thoughts; act upon them, and you *will* do something. With such qualifications, you may go to the work of religious zeal.

Permit me now to point out to you the WAYS in which your zeal may be employed appropriate to your sex, age, and circumstances. "*As we have opportunity*," said the apostle, "*let us do good.*" Opportunity is a golden word, and is itself more precious than rubies, and should never be lost by neglect. There are three things, which if lost, can never be recovered—time, the soul, and an opportunity. And it is of importance for you to ponder this. It becomes us all to remember the advice of the sage to his disciples, "Be ye mindful of opportunities." Youth is *your* opportunity for doing good; not, indeed, if you live, your only one, but it is a very precious one. The remarks made in the last sermon on the subject of the leisure afforded by your present situation for the cultivation of piety, apply with equal force to the opportunities it affords for usefulness. In married life, with a family around you, and all the cares it brings with it, you will have comparatively little opportunity, at least, for some of those activities which you can now carry forward.

Among the ways in which female activity could be appropriately carried on, I must begin, of course, with the education of children in our *Sunday-schools.* The instruction of the girls is, of course, intrusted to females, and what an honor is thus assigned to

them! It is passing strange how any young woman pretending to religion can satisfy herself that she is doing all she can, or all she ought for God's glory and the good of her fellow-creatures, who is not devoting her youthful energies to this blessed work. And yet it is somewhat painful to observe how many of the young women of the more respectable families of our congregations, withhold their services from this useful and valuable sphere of female activity. I am not unaware of some difficulties and objections to this engagement for their daughters that present themselves to the mind of a careful, judicious, and anxious mother. But surely the proper exercise of maternal influence and authority would, in most cases, be sufficient to counterbalance those contingent evils to which the mixed society of the Sunday-school community might expose young females: I mean in the way of forming acquaintance and unsuitable connections. A well-taught and wisely-trained girl will surely know, and ought to know, how to avoid a general and undesirable familiarity, without being suspected of a haughty disdain, or a proud neglect of those who are not upon her level in the ranks of social life. It does require care, I admit, but this care will be sufficient to avoid the contingent evils alluded to. And I am free to confess that the frequent and mixed meetings of the teachers, of both sexes, which are held in some schools, are by no means necessary for the good working of the system, and are very undesirable on other accounts; and it is not to be won-

dered at, that for this reason many mothers do not allow their daughters to become teachers, and that daughters themselves do not wish to engage in the work. Acquaintances have, no doubt, in some cases been formed, by no means suitable. It is therefore eminently incumbent upon all who are thus engaged to be anxiously watchful that no part of their conduct *give* occasion to those who *seek* it, to speak ill of the effect of Sunday-school teaching upon the character and conduct of the devoted females who are engaged in it.

District-visiting societies and benevolent institutions for affording temporal relief and spiritual instruction to the sick poor, conducted by female agency, are become very common, both in the Church of England and among Dissenters. It would not be desirable, of course, that these should be chiefly conducted by *young* women. Matronly age, experience, and weight, are necessary to give propriety and effect to such a labor of love, but surely there would be no impropriety in associating even in these good works, a youthful female with an elderly one.

The Bible and missionary societies, and other religious institutions, have called into operation a large number of females who are employed in collecting money for those important organizations, and for supplying the poor with copies of the Word of God. There can be no objection to this, provided the more youthful portion of the sex so employed be associated with those who are older,

and also that very young girls be not employed at all in the work. Nothing can be more repugnant to my sense of propriety, than for young females to be sent out with what are called "collecting cards," to wander over a town, knocking at the doors of any body and every body, for the purpose of begging money, and sometimes entering into counting-houses, and assailing even *young men* with their importunities.

The distribution of religious tracts is another line of female activity in which many may be eminently useful. This is a means of doing good universally characteristic of the age. The press was never so active either for good or for evil as it is now. Its productions are instruments which every hand can wield, not excepting that of a young and even comparatively illiterate female. But the same caution must be here applied also, that nothing be done to break down the barriers of female modesty.

Perhaps it will be thought I ought not to overlook one line of female usefulness peculiar to the sex, and especially to the youthful portion of it, and that is, furnishing articles by their pencil and their needle, the products of which, when sold, shall go to the support of the cause of Christ. There is one way of doing this, about which I confess I have serious doubts: I mean the modern practice of BAZAARS, or, as they are now called, "*Fancy Sales.*" I am aware of all the arguments that are employed in favor of them —such as their gainfulness, and their calling forth contributions from those who would give or could

give in no other way. A very beautiful little tract, entitled, "The Bazaar," was published two years ago, in which the writer, with tolerable show of argument, endeavored to prove that these means *for the support of religion* hardly comport with the sanctity of the object. A certain air of frivolity and worldliness at these sales is thrown over the whole; so that such a scene looks like piety keeping a stall at "Vanity Fair." "Recall," says this writer, "the scene itself, the gay dress, the music, and the raffle—flattery and compliment instead of truth. Purchases made from regard to man, and not free-will offerings to God. Mortification and disappointment, in place of the approving consciousness of her who 'had done what she could.' Skill exercised in making that which is worthless pass for much. Arts practiced, advantage taken, with the excuse that it is for a religious purpose, that would be thought dishonorable in the common business transactions of the world. Then follows *ennui* after excitement; the gaze of the heap of left things to be disposed of, or that will do for other bazaars, with the false estimate of the result of this. There is another fact in the history of such sales: some who shun the ball-room and the concert, and never entered a theater, act there the shop-woman, talk the nonsense befitting the bazaar-room, and are as worldly, vain, and foolish, as she who seldom dreams of any thing but pleasure, earth, and time."

Now this, I admit, is rather severe, and is, per

haps, a little tinctured with the ruby color of exaggeration. Still there is *some* truth in it, and it may serve as a corrective, if it should not as a destructive. To the pure, all things are pure, and there may be those who can enter, pass through, and leave such scenes, without receiving the smallest injury to the devout and happy seriousness of their religious character. At any rate, it is coming near the appearance of evil, and should excite caution and prayer on the part of those who consider the matter as innocent and therefore lawful. Bazaars, however, are not the only way in which the needle may be and is employed by pious females for works of charity. Working parties are very common. I have one that meets periodically in my own vestry, where articles of utility are made and shipped for sale in India, the produce of which, amounting sometimes for one year's labor to eighty pounds, is devoted to the support of orphan-schools connected with our missionary stations abroad. At these meetings, piety, friendship, and zeal, all blend their feelings of enjoyment, and furnish happy seasons for those who attend them.

I knew a most accomplished woman, long since in heaven, who was called by grace out of the gay world, and who, after her conversion, felt an irresistible desire to do something for the spiritual welfare of her fellow-creatures and the glory of God; but her means were more limited than her aspirations. She thoroughly understood the science of music, and her most exquisite singing had been the

delight of gay and fashionable circles. Her taste in drawing and painting was equal to her skill in music. After her conversion to God, she turned these elegant accomplishments to the noble purpose of glorifying God, "who doth instruct man to discretion," by setting some of the most admired Italian and German airs to sacred words, and painting some Scripture subjects, both of which she sold among the circle of her friends, often receiving large sums, especially for her paintings, and consecrating all, like the woman who broke her alabaster box of ointment, to the honor of the Saviour whom she intensely loved. Perhaps the eye of some gifted woman may range over these pages, who may have a heart for Christ and his cause, with as scanty means and as rare talents to serve both, as the female above alluded to; to her would I say, "Go thou and do likewise."

Is there not one way in which young females, unable to do much in producing tasteful works, may be occupied in doing good for God and their fellow-creatures, without, in the smallest degree, violating the rule of decorum or infringing on the delicacy of female modesty—I mean *visiting the chamber of sickness or the cottage of poverty*, to read to the poor invalid or to the ignorant of their own sex the Word of God and religious tracts. Surely it is no invasion of either the rights of man or the duties of the minister, for a pious, modest female, though young—I do not mean children, of course—to go to the bedside of the sufferer, and from Holy

Scripture pour into her ears the words, and into her heart the sacred truths of that precious volume, which are the best balm for a wounded spirit, and the only consolation for a broken heart. Nor can it be improper for her to take her chair by the side of a poor mother plying her needle, or watching the cradle, and ready to hear words whereby she may be saved. What a field of usefulness, almost unoccupied, is here opened to the ambition and the energies of our pious young women who have leisure for such occupation! Is it not thus the deficiencies of church accommodation and ministerial instruction can be best supplied, and our laboring population, as to their destitution of religious advantages, be best overtaken? How many thousands of women in the laboring class are there in this large town, and in every other of magnitude, who are so occupied by the cares of their families and the demands of their husbands, as never to join the public assemblies for worship, nor to hear the joyful sound of the sermon, or the psalm, who would hail as a ministering angel the female that would come to their scene of constant monotonous care and labor, and cause their dreary abode to echo with the music that tells them of a present salvation even for them, and of a land hereafter where the "wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are forever at rest." Oh, ye "devout women, not a few," if ye have hearts of pity for the poor, or compassion for the souls that are likely to be lost amid their "being careful and troubled about many things and their

much serving;" or if you have any zeal for the glory of God, do, do, employ your leisure hours in paying these visits of mercy to the houses of poverty, ignorance, sickness, and misery. Here there *can* be nothing in opposition to female modesty, nothing that can minister to female vanity. The seclusion of the scene prevents all this; no rude or inquisitive gaze follows her there; no language of fulsome compliment or sickly adulation is addressed to her there; she is alone with sorrow, or witnessed only by her conscience and her God. Oh, what, to a young female so occupied, is the most elegant and beautiful woman glittering in the gay scene of fashionable folly, the admiration of many eyes, and the envy of more? What is all the adulation poured by the lip of flattery into the ear of beauty, compared with the blessing of her that was ready to perish, so gratefully bestowed on that sister of mercy, who had thus "caused the widow's heart to sing for joy!"

Companionship affords a means of usefulness of which you ought not to be slow in availing yourself. It may be you have formed friendships in the days of your thoughtlessness with some as thoughtless as yourselves. But *you* have been awakened to solemn and holy reflection. You have, through the work of divine grace, passed from death unto life; but your friends still remain under the power of the world and far from God. Here, then, is a most legitimate object of pious zeal, to seek by all affectionate and judicious means their conversion.

to Christ. What an honor and felicity would it be, should you be the means of saving the soul of your companion. How close and tender would be your friendship from that hour, when the tie of affection was doubled and sanctified by the bond of religion! How happy will be your intercourse, how sweet your communion! A covenant is made between you which will go with you to heaven; for all friendships formed on the basis of religion will last forever. Take with you then, if you can, to that happy world, the friend of your heart, there to renew, perfect, and perpetuate the intercourse which you have commenced on earth, and realize the idea that the closest and happiest friendship commenced below is but the bud, and scarcely even that, which will blossom with amaranthine freshness through eternity in heaven.

Woman's talent for a flowing, easy, tender style of *correspondence* is generally acknowledged; and ought she not to employ *this* as a means of serving God and her fellow-creatures? How many have been thus led to an acquaintance with religion! There is great moral power in a well-written religious letter. It is known and felt to be an effusion of love from one heart to affect another. It is read alone, when no one is a witness of the effect. There is not the reproving or monitory presence of the writer. There is no disposition to feel offended and to resent the intrusive advice or warning. Young women, employ your pen, and breathe affection from the female quill.

I shall now lay down some RULES for the direction of female activity, which must be very rigidly observed, in order to prevent it from doing harm in one way as well as good in another.

The zeal of young women must ever be exercised with *the strictest regard to the modesty of youth*, and especially of youthful females. It must never be forgotten that bashfulness is the beauty of female character: like the violet, which seems to court seclusion, and indicates its coy retreat rather by its fragrance than its obtrusiveness of color or of place, her very retiringness adds to her attractions. Any thing that would destroy this—that would strip off this delicate vail of modesty, and make her bold and obtrusive; that would thrust her by an impulsive ambition of her own mind upon the public notice, instead of being sought out for usefulness; that would make her clamorous in her complaints of neglect, and imperious in her demands for employment—would inflict an irreparable injury on society by depriving her of that passive power of gentleness by which her influence can be most effectually exerted in society. I confess that with all my desires for female activity within its proper sphere, and the legitimate exercise of woman's zeal, I am made not a little jealous by the active spirit of the age, and the extent to which the sex is employed, for the delicate beauty and excellence of the female character. Money might flow into the treasury of our societies, and numbers might be added to their friends—spirit might be given to our operations, and the triumphs

of the cause might seem to be multiplied—but if any injury were sustained by the female character all that was otherwise achieved would be accomplished at a dreadful cost and a fearful loss. Therefore I entreat you, my young friends, to guard against this evil. Cultivate that meekness, gentleness, and retiringness, which are your brightest ornaments. Make it appear that in what you are doing for God and his cause, you neither seek publicity, nor aim to attract attention, nor to court applause. Avoid all that undue familiarity, flippancy, or trifling with the other sex, which would look as if your object was rather to attract notice from them than really to do good. I ask for nothing prim, prudish, or repulsive; for no dread of converse with men, or flight from their company, as if there were moral contamination in their presence and pollution in their words. Excessive prudery has not always been associated with the highest-toned purity; nor has an easy, artless frankness of manner been ever the indication of a bold and forward disposition. Still be reserved, without pride or coldness; and frank, easy, and ingenuous, without familiarity and obtrusiveness. In this age your danger lies in the latter extreme rather than in the former. Be contented that your influence should flow through society like the blood in the human frame, carrying life and energy with it, but by channels where it is neither heard nor seen.

Female zeal in religious matters must ever be carried forward with *due regard to the duties of home.*

If, as I have stated, home *be* the sphere of woman's mission, and the first and chief place of her duty, no public objects of any kind must be allowed to interfere with these. This I have already alluded to, but on account of its importance I refer to it again. It is not to the honor of religion, nor to the credit of a wife and mother, for a husband to come to his home at the dinner hour expecting to see every thing ready and in order, and find all in confusion, nothing properly arranged, and then have his time wasted by waiting for his wife, who has not finished her benevolent rambles, or her morning's activity at some female meeting. Nor is it much for his happiness on coming home in the evening, suffering from the fatigue and vexation of the world's rough business, and when wanting the soothing influence of a wife's sweet voice, to have to sit hours in sadness and solitude, because she is away at some evening public meeting. This is not the way to promote connubial felicity, nor to interest his mind on behalf of the objects of his wife's zeal. It will never do to serve the Lord with time taken from domestic order, comfort, and family duty. A neglected husband and family are a sad comment upon some women's religious activity: and it is a comment not unfrequently expressed by others who see it in the appearance of the children and the house. These are the instances, of which some who could do much without infringing on domestic claims, but who will do nothing, avail themselves to justify their own selfishness and indolence, and I am sorry

that such instances should ever be afforded to them.

Still, a woman *may* look well to the ways of her household, and some do, who by method, diligence, and dispatch, set their house in order, and yet have time to devote to the cause of religion and humanity. Solomon's description of the virtuous woman comprehends both these: "She looketh well to the ways of her household. The heart of her husband doth safely trust her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. Her children rise up and call her blessed. She giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She eateth not the bread of idleness." Here is domestic order, management, economy, in perfection. Yet with all this is associated, "She stretcheth out her hands to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy; and in her tongue is the law of kindness." There the good house wife is supposed to find time for works of mercy abroad, as well as of industry at home. Provided the comfort of a husband is never neglected, and he has no reason to complain, and does not complain of the want of his wife's society; and the supervision of the children, as to their general well-being, and their education and home-training are properly attended to; and also the whole course of domestic order be maintained with regularity and precision, it is to a Christian woman's honor that her method of dispatch and order in the regulation of her household affairs is such as to leave her ample time for usefulness, without the least infring

ing on her duties as a wife, a mother, or a mistress Except in the case of a large family, a destitution of all public spirit is no credit to any female. She can not be educating her family as she ought to do, if she is not by her example as well as by her precept training them to habits of benevolence.

The two extremes, then, are to be avoided—of allowing, on the one hand, the duties of home so entirely to engross the female heart, as to feel no interest in any thing that is going on in the world for the alleviation of its sorrows, or the reformation of its vices, and to cherish no desire to promote the great objects of Christian zeal; and, on the other hand, to allow them to occupy the attention so far as to neglect the claims of husband, children, and servants. The chief danger, in this age, lies in giving too much attention to public duties, especially in the metropolis, the seat and centre of all our great societies, and the place of their annual convocation. It is not much to the credit of a mother, nor for the advantage of her daughters, to be too fond of taking them to many of these public gatherings. The month of May affords a strong temptation to this, which should be most assiduously watched. It is not only lawful, but proper and desirable, that our wives and daughters should be present at these meetings. Who would debar them from these assemblies, or shut them out from these feasts of holy charity, or exclude them from scenes in which they take as deep an interest, and to which they have contributed equally with our

selves? Their sex is more benefitted by them even than the opposite one. Let woman's hear. there bleed over the woes of humanity, and especially of her down-trodden sisters in the lands of darkness; let woman's hand be there stretched out to lift them up from their degradation, and woman's eye there sparkle with a brighter luster as it rejoices over the records of our missions, and the triumphs of Christianity. But, then, let not this rise into such a passion as shall spoil her for scenes partaking of less fascination in some respects, but to her of more importance in others.

In order to this, let our younger women in these days of general benevolence guard against acquiring in youth that taste for public activity which, though it will not prevent them from entering into domestic life, would, to a very considerable extent, disqualify them for its duties. A love of activity is a good; a passion for it would be an evil. There is such a thing as well-regulated, temperate, religious zeal, and there is also such a thing as a species of religious dissipation. When a young person loves home and home duties, but is ever willing and ready on suitable occasions, and for a proper object, to leave it for works of religious and common benevolence, she is in a right disposition. But when home and home duties are irksome, and she is ever longing for the excitement of public duties, her taste has been corrupted, her character damaged, and her prospects for future life become somewhat beclouded. If she has abjured the intention or wish

ever to become a wife, and has, without entering a convent, determined to be a sister of charity, it may be all very well to desire to give herself wholly to works of benevolent activity; but if not, let her beware how she acquires predilections and forms habits which would equally unfit and indispose her for the duties of wedded life.

Young females while at home should be generally *regulated by the wishes of their parents*, and especially by their *mothers*. They are not, and should neither wish nor attempt to be, independent of parental control. A good and wise daughter will ever look up with affectionate deference to a good and wise mother, and will therefore enter on no career of religious activity without consulting her. It may be that the wishes of the child and the opinions of the parent, on this point, are sometimes in opposition to each other, and it requires little argument to prove which in this case ought to give way. Perhaps some zealous, ardent, young female will put such a question as this: "I feel it my duty to God to attempt to spread religion, and to do good to my fellow-creatures, and especially in the way of saving their souls, but my parents, not being themselves religious, oppose it, and will not allow me either to engage in Sunday-school instruction, to collect for missionary or Bible societies, or to go and distribute tracts, or to read the Scriptures to the poor. Is it my duty to follow out my own convictions, or yield up my wishes to my parents?" It would be very proper for you, in a respectful and

deferential manner, to state your wishes, and use every argument to obtain their compliance; but if this should prove ineffectual, you must then submit and bear the privation, without resentful sullenness. To be moody, ill-tempered, and petulant under the refusal, would too plainly indicate that you have much yet to do in your own heart to spread religion there before you seek to communicate it to others. You are under no such obligation to exercise your religious zeal in any particular way as you are to seek your own salvation. It is manifestly your duty to do good, and you can do it, even under such restrictions as those I am now supposing; for you can set a holy example, and you can pray for the spiritual welfare of others, and correspond with absent friends, and perhaps influence by conversation your companions: and thus are not, and can not be, shut out from all methods of doing good; and as to those from which you are debarred by parental authority, God will take the will for the deed, and reward the intention, as he would have done the action, had you been permitted to perform it. Consider also that as your parents do not enter into your views of religion, they will regard your conduct, if you persist, in no other light than that of a refractory spirit, and w' thus receive a prejudice against religion on a ount of your conduct; whereas a meek and goo atured yielding to their wishes, and sacrificing an object which they perceive to have been near your heart, will dispose them to think favorably of that religious principle

which could produce such a spirit of unresisting and uncomplaining self-denial.

In order to be useful, it is necessary to cultivate habits of order, punctuality, and the right appropriation of time. These remarks apply, of course, to such as move in the wealthier circles of life, and whose opportunities of doing good are not confined to the Sabbath. Week-days with them should be working-days for God and man, by the offices of religion and humanity. There is no doing good without time. Benevolence requires leisure. Two things can not be done at once. How much time is wasted, which the miseries and wants of society require.* "Time is the most undefinable, yet paradoxical of things; the past is gone, the future is not come, and the present becomes the past, even while we attempt to define it, and like the flash of the lightning, at once exists and expires. Time is the measurer of all things, but is itself immeasurable, and the grand discloser of all things, but is itself undisclosed. Like space, it is incomprehensible, because it has no limit, and it would be still more so, if it had. It is more obscure in its source than the Nile, and in its termination than the Niger, and advances like the slowest tide, but retreats like the swiftest torrent. It gives wings of lightning to pleasure, but feet of lead to pain, and lends expectation a curb, but enjoyment a spur. It robs beauty

* Perhaps the following very striking antithetical description of time will amuse and instruct many of the readers of this discourse.

of her charms, to bestow them on her picture, and builds a monument to merit, but denies it a house; it is the transient and deceitful flatterer of falsehood, but the tried and final friend of truth. Time is the most subtle, yet the most insatiable of depredators, and by appearing to take nothing, is permitted to take all, nor can it be satisfied, until it has stolen the world from us, and us from the world. It constantly flies, yet overcomes all things by flight, and although it is the present ally, it will be the future conqueror of death. Time, the cradle of hope, but the grave of ambition, is the stern corrector of fools, but the salutary counselor of the wise, bringing all they dread to the one, and all they desire to the other; but like Cassandra, it warns us with a voice that even the sagest discredit too long, and the silliest believe too late. Wisdom walks before it, opportunity with it, and repentance behind it; he that has made it his friend, will have little to fear from his enemies; but he that has made it his enemy, will have little to hope from his friends." Redeem the time, is a voice that ought ever to be sounding in our ears. We want it for our own improvement, and we want it for the good of others. We can do much with it, but nothing without it. There is scarcely any thing to which the injunction of our Lord more strictly applies than to this—"*Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost.*" Order redeems time—so does punctuality; therefore, order and punctuality are among the means of mercy and zeal, by supplying the time necessary

for their exercise. Redeem time from useless reading, and also from that excessive addictedness to the accomplishments of music, drawing, modern languages, and fancy work, which is so characteristic of the present day. That some portion of time may be given by females in wealthy circles to these things, is admitted. We are not for parting with even the exquisite polish which skill in these matters imparts to female elegance. We love to see even the decorations of female mind and manners. Of the one, I may have to speak again in a future discourse, and therefore shall merely now say, that when the cries of misery are entering into her ears, and the groans of creation are rising all around her; when such countless millions abroad are living and dying without the light of the gospel and the hope of salvation; when at her own doors will be found so many passing in ignorance and wickedness to their great account; is it for a humane, and especially for a religious young woman to spend so much precious time each day over her knitting, crotchet, or embroidery-work? As she sits plying those needles, and bringing out, it may be, the tasteful device hour after hour, does she never hear the plaint of human woe, "Come over and help us?" Does it never occur to her, how many souls have gone into eternity unprepared to meet their God since she took her chair and commenced her daily task? Or, even leaving out of view, for a moment, the employment of her time for deeds of religious zeal, is it not an afflictive sight to behold

so much time thrown away on these elegant trifles, which might be so much better employed in cultivating the mind by useful reading? You can not do good, then, without making some sacrifices of time, which might be agreeably, if not very profitably, spent on matters of taste.

Permit me now to remind you that all your efforts of religious zeal should be carried on in *a spirit of faith and prayer*. It should not be merely the love of activity, much less an ambitious fondness for publicity and display, that moves you; but a strong and prevailing feeling of love to God and love to man. It must not be a substitute *for* religion, but the impulse and the constraining power *of* it. Instead of weakening your own piety, it must strengthen it. Emanating from your own holy mind, it must, like the newly-kindled flame, act back upon its source and increase the intensity of that. You must be watchful over your own spirit, and take care that your humility and spirituality be not impaired by a spirit of vanity. You should look well to your motives, and subject your heart to a most rigid self-scrutiny. In the retirement of the closet you should cultivate that spirit of dependence which expresses itself *in* prayer, and is cherished *by* prayer. The more you do for the spiritual welfare of others, the more you must do for your own. You should take alarm if you find that the excitements of zeal produce an indisposedness for the more retired and quiet exercises of devotion. A renewed consecration to your work

should often take place, preceded by a renewed consecration of *yourselves* to God.

To encourage you in your career of holy activity, I may call you, in conclusion, to consider the nature of your work, and the consequences that will follow even your humble endeavors to carry it on. It is religion, the gift of God to man, which Jesus Christ came to our world to bring with him, which the Spirit of God is poured out to produce, and the Scriptures are written to describe and impart; it is religion, the balm of man's wounded heart, the renovator of his corrupt nature, the means of his happiness, his preparation for immortal glory; it is religion, the source of individual comfort, domestic peace, social order, national prosperity, and the whole world's restoration; it is religion, which shall cover our earth with the glories of the Millennium, and raise up countless millions of our race from the ruins of the fall to the heavens of the eternal God; it is religion, that shall be the glory and the bliss of the redeemed church throughout eternity; it is religion, in the cause of which prophets predicted. apostles labored, martyrs bled, ministers labor at home, and missionaries abroad; it is *this* you are promoting by all your efforts of religious zeal. In this cause you shall not labor in vain, nor without your reward, for "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;" and your humble labors, though as drops in that mighty ocean, fall there and help to replenish the mighty mass—and after this shall come the

world where you shall be gathered unto those holy women whose lives were briefly recorded in a past sermon; and to all those chaste virgins and holy matrons, who have wrought to weave by their labors the crown of glory which shall ever flourish on the head of our Emmanuel.

The Young Woman at Home.

"Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise."—EPHESIANS vi. 1, 2.

"It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman."—PROVERBS xxi 19.

"Be kindly affectioned one to another"—ROM, xii. 10.

IT was the saying of a judicious governess to a pupil just quitting her establishment, "Be assured, my young friend, that the order, comfort, and happiness of a family, very greatly depend upon the temper and conduct of the younger members of it, when they cease to be children. I have seen the declining years of some kind parents completely embittered by the pride, self-will, and inconsiderate conduct of their young people. When a young lady returns home, if she is not so good a daughter as she was before, whatever acquisitions she may have made at school, she had better never have been there."

This advice, so sensible and so appropriate, not only shows how well-qualified was the admirable woman who proffered it for the discharge of her duties, but is well worthy of being written in the

first page of every young woman's album; yea, upon the tablet of her heart, and to be read every day of her residence in her father's house.

It has been said, we are all really what we are relatively. Akin to this, we may add, every one is best known at home. Many people not only dress their person, but their character, when they go into company, till it has become almost a current saying, "Tell me not what they are in company, but what they are in the family circle." *Home*, as we have already said in a former discourse, is one of the sweetest words in our language; and nowhere better understood than in our own country. But it involves as many duties as it does enjoyments. It is not only a paradise of delights, but a school of virtue. A family is a little world within doors: the miniature resemblance of the great world without. It is in the home of her parents that a young female is trained for the future home of her own; and, generally speaking, what she *was* in the former, that, in full maturity and expansion, she *will be* in the latter—the good wife, and judicious mother, looking well to the ways of her household, being the full-blown rose of which the good *girl*, at home, was the bud of promise and of hope. And it may be depended upon as a principle, suggested by reason, as well as a fact corroborated by observation, that she who contributes nothing to the happiness of her early home, as a daughter, is not likely to find others contributing to her later one as a wife, a mother, and a mistress.

It is, therefore, of immense importance that you should, at once, at the very commencement of this discourse, pause and ponder the momentous truth that you are preparing your own future home by the manner in which you conduct yourself in that of your father; and *because* of its importance it is thus dwelt upon with such repetition.

In one aspect, the subject of this sermon is of more consequence, in reference to you, than it is in reference to your brothers; *you* remain longer at home than they. It is the usual order of things for them to remove early from beneath the parental roof, first to learn, and then to pursue, their avocations in life; so that if *their* temper be unamiable, and their habits unfriendly to domestic peace, they soon depart, and bear away the annoyance. But *you*, if not necessitated to go out into a situation for your own support, remain with your parents till you are married, and if not wedded, you are with them continually. In the latter case you are a fixture in the household, and should therefore be a happy one. Of how much comfort or disquiet, according to her character and conduct, may a daughter be to a family through a period of ten or twenty years, dating from the period of her return from school. Hence it is always a source, not of unmixed delight, but of some anxiety, to a considerate mother, what kind of *home* character her child will prove when she has finished her education, and exchanges the company of her governess and fellow-pupils for that of the family circle.

Here, then, is the first thing, the great thing to be determined upon by the young woman at home, to be a large contributor to the happiness of the domestic circle. You can not be a cipher in the house, nor sustain a negative character. You are a member of the little community, and the other members must be affected by your conduct. You are ever in the midst of them, and your actions, words, and very looks, exert an influence upon them. Behold, then, your starting-point in the career of home duties. Take up this resolution intelligently, deliberately, determinately: "I WILL, BY GOD'S GRACE, DO ALL I CAN TO MAKE MY HOME HAPPY TO OTHERS, AND THUS COMFORTABLE TO MYSELF." Look at this resolution, revolve it, imprint it on your memory, heart, conscience. Is it not wise, virtuous, right? Does not reason, conscience, self-love approve it? Let it be a serious matter of consideration with you, and not merely a thought passing through the mind, and leaving no trace behind, but a deep, abiding, influential consideration. Have not your parents a right to expect it? Is it not the most reasonable thing in the world, that enjoying the protection and comforts of home, you should in return make home happy?

To diffuse happiness anywhere is a blissful employment, but most of all, at home. To light up any countenances with joy is to a benevolent mind a desirable thing, but most of all the countenances of parents, and brothers, and sisters. Set out with the intense ambition to compel from the whole

family circle the testimony that it was a happy era in the domestic history when you came permanently to reside at home. O to hear a mother say, "Thy coming, my daughter, was as the settlement of a ministering angel among us—thy amenities of temper, thy constant efforts to please, thy sweet and gentle self-sacrificing disposition, have been a lamp in our dwelling, in the light of which we have all rejoiced! What a large accession, my beloved child, hast thou brought to our domestic felicity! Receive thy mother's thanks and blessing!" A harder heart than yours, my young friends, might be moved by such a hope as this. Contemplate now the contrast to this, when the conduct of a daughter is such as to extort such a declaration as the following from sorrowing parents: "We looked forward with pleasure and with hope, not altogether unmixed with anxiety, to the time when we should receive her back from school, to be our companion and our comfort. How bitter is our disappointment! Her unamiable disposition, her regardlessness of our happiness, her restlessness in the family circle, her craving for any company but ours, are painfully obvious. It was—we regret to say it—a sad increase of our domestic trouble, when she became a permanent inmate of our house." Sighs and tears follow this sad confession. Which of these shall be the case with you, my young friends? Can you hesitate?

Having, then, made up your mind to be a comfort at home, you should, and will, of course, inquire

into the means of accomplishing your purpose. These will, if the purpose be fixed, and the desire intense, almost without enumeration, suggest themselves. They who really want to make others happy, will find out their own means of doing so, and be ingenious in their devices to effectuate the end. Many things are difficult, and require deep thought, but not the study to please. If our heart be set upon it, we can diffuse bliss almost without effort or contrivance. From a heart fully possessed with the desire to make others happy, kind acts and offices will flow off, like the ebullitions of a spring or the streams of a fountain, without the labor of drawing or purifying the water.

But we will, for your guidance, lay down rules for that behavior at home, which will enable you to make large contributions to the felicity of the family.

Should your parents themselves be truly pious people, who have trained you up in the fear of the Lord, their deepest solicitude and most earnest prayer for you is, that you may "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth." You have been the witnesses of some of their anxiety on this ground, and for this object. You have heard a father's prayers, have seen, perhaps, a mother's tears for your salvation; but of the *whole* of their concern on this point you never *can* know. It is too deep for you to fathom. Till this great subject is determined, till they see you in earnest to lead a pious life, they can not be happy. They value

your love, your respect, your attentions to their comfort, your general good conduct, your acquisitions, and not unfrequently feel a parent's pride over you; but, "Alas, alas!" they say, "one thing thou lackest yet, and that is, the one thing needful—true piety—the salvation of the soul. Oh, my daughter, that thou wast a real Christian; and that thy love to Christ was as sincere as thy love to me; and that all thy other excellences were sanctified by the crowning one of true religion!" What a check is such a reflection to the joy of a Christian parent. How many hours of bitterness such reflections occasion! What an interruption to the bliss of a family does it occasion when there is a difference of taste on this most momentous of all subjects. How is a mother's heart grieved to see her daughters, after all the pains she has taken with them to form their religious character, more taken up with fashion, company, and gayety, than with eternal realities! And that good man, the father, how is he distressed to see his counsels unheeded, his prayers unanswered, and they whom he had hoped to lead to the altar of God, far more fond of the gay ceremonial of the world. On the other hand, how happy are those parents whose children are one with them in this momentous concern. How sweet and sacred are the seasons of family worship, when, not by constraint, but willingly, the children assemble round the domestic altar, and join in the sacrifice of prayer and praise. No jars and discords now arise for the want of sympathy in

these great subjects. No opposition of tastes occurs—no clashing of interests. Often and often does the mother exclaim in the fondness of her heart, "Thank God, that dear girl is a Christian, and adds to all her other excellences which endear her to my heart, sincere piety toward God! The beauties of holiness invest her charms with a loveliness that nothing else can impart."

In order to make home happy, there must be a proper consideration and right discharge of all the duties you owe to the various members of the little community of which it is composed.

First of all, there are the PARENTS. That home can not be a happy one where these are neglected, and filial duty is wanting in the heart and conduct of the children. God has selected the most comprehensive term that could be employed on this subject. "*Honor* thy father and mother"—this includes respect, love, and obedience. I have not time nor is it necessary here to state the claims which parents have upon your gratitude, reverence, and regard. I can only remind you how much of the happiness of home depends upon a right understanding and discharge of the duties you owe to them. When a father's heart is wounded by disobedient conduct, or even disrespectful language; when a mother's comfort is neglected, and her burdens are unshared; when it is apparent that children are much more intent upon their own gratification than that of their parents; when services are rendered tardily, reluctantly, and with ill-

nature; when complaint is uttered on one part, only to be answered by impertinence on the other—happiness must be a stranger in such a home. Disobedience in young children, in whom reason and reflection are yet feeble, is bad enough, but far worse in those who are grown, or growing to years of maturity. On the other hand, if it be beautiful to see the tender assiduities and affectionate attentions of childhood, which are rather the efforts of instinct than of reason, it is a far more attractive scene to witness the reverent regard, the studious desire to please, the anxious effort to gratify, manifested toward her parents by a grown-up daughter. Here the intelligent mind is moved by the affectionate heart, and the affectionate heart is, in return, guided and impelled by the intelligent mind.

Have your parents been less educated than you, and at the same time have spared no expense to afford you advantages which they did not possess, how ungrateful would it be in you by any part of your conduct to display your superiority and make them conscious of their ignorance.

Before a mother's infirmities reach the point of actual incompetency, a good daughter will feel solicitous to share with her the burden of domestic care, and to relieve her as far as possible from her load of maternal duty. This requires caution, lest by an officious obtrusion of help, it should be suspected she was desirous of thrusting the mother from her superintendence, and of stepping into her place. It can never fail to wound a mother's heart to be sup-

posed to be incompetent for her place as female head of the family. Even when imbecility *is* creeping on, she should be made to feel it as little as possible, and the forms and show of authority be suffered to remain, when the power has passed away. Jealousy is one of the last passions that die in the human heart, and it should not be awakened by any part of filial conduct in the mind of a parent. A wife, mother, and mistress, deposed by her own daughter, is a painful sight. She may have much weakness, but still enough of reflection remains to make her feel her humiliation. Therefore, young women, in aiding a mother, for which you ought to be ever in readiness, do not attempt to wrest the keys from her keeping, but only employ them under her direction. For this be ever ready. It is to me one of the most lovely scenes on earth to see a young woman risen up to be the companion and helper of her mother, placing herself by her side, and foregoing many an invitation and opportunity of personal enjoyment to relieve her solitude, to lighten her cares, or to minister to her comfort. Your object, then, should be to share a mother's labor, without superseding her authority; and to assist her in a way so tender and so delicate as shall neither awaken her suspicion that you wish to supplant her, nor make her feel that she is incapable of doing without you.

To these duties all should be attentive, but especially those daughters who make a profession of religion. Many who hear and many who will read

this sermon are happily in this state; and to them would I most earnestly and affectionately say, "Let your light shine" at home, that its inmates "seeing your good works, may glorify God your Heavenly Father." Let it be most impressively and constantly felt by you, and let it be seen by others that you feel that religion is no abstract thing of times, places, and occasions; but an element of general character, which is to enter into all relations, all duties, and all engagements. It must improve us in every thing, spreading like a gilded surface over our whole selves and all our conduct, and shining like a beautiful polish on every other excellence. It must make you a better daughter in every respect, more respectful, more kind, more devoted to your parents, and compel them to say, "Happy day when she became a Christian, for from that hour she became a lovelier and more loving child!"

It may be that in some cases your parents are not truly converted to God. This places you in a difficult and delicate situation, and will require the utmost solicitude, care, and prayer, that you may be prevented from doing or being any thing that would prejudice them against religion; and that you may be enabled on the contrary so to conduct yourself as to prepossess them in its favor. You must affect no superiority, nor even *seem* to say, "Stand by, I am holier than thou." This is improper to any one, much more to a parent. You can pray for them, and you can exhibit to them, by your ex

ample invested with all the beauties of holiness, what religion is; but direct efforts to bring them under its influence, though these should not be altogether withheld, should be conducted with the greatest tenderness, humility, modesty, and delicacy. There must be no lecturing, much less any reproach or accusation. A deep, tender, loving solicitude for their spiritual welfare must be seen vailed with modesty, but still *seen*, penetrating the transparent and graceful covering; a solicitude, which only now and then presumes to *speak;* but when it does, always in love. Such a line of conduct may accomplish its purpose, and produce results like the following:

"A female, who had been some years known and respected for her quiet, consistent, unobtrusive Christian deportment, called on her minister, to introduce her aged mother, who leaned on her arm, and seemed to repose on her that tender dependence which is so soothing and delightful to an aged parent, and so heart-thrilling to a dutiful and grateful child. Both were overcome by their feelings, and it was some moments before either could speak. The minister desired them to be seated, and cheerfully said: 'Well, Hannah, I suppose this is your good mother—I am very happy to see her.' 'Yes,' replied the mother, in broken accents, 'her mother, and her daughter too. Five and twenty years ago I bore her in infancy; and now, through her instrumentality, I trust I am born to God.'"

Mr. Jay relates a similar anecdote. "'Well,'

said a mother, one day, weeping (her daughter being proposed as a candidate for Christian communion), 'I will resist no longer. How can I bear to see my dear child love and read the Scriptures, while I never look into the Bible—to see her retire and seek God, while I never pray—to see her going to the Lord's table, while his death is nothing to me?' 'Ah,' said she to the minister who called to inform her of her daughter's desire, wiping her eyes, 'yes, sir, I know she is right, and I am wrong; I have seen her firm under reproach, and patient under provocation, and cheerful in all her sufferings. When, in her late illness, she was looking for dissolution, heaven stood in her face. Oh, that I was as fit to die! I ought to have taught her, but I am sure she has taught me. How can I bear to see her joining the church of God, and leaving me behind—perhaps forever?' From that hour she prayed in earnest that the God of her child would be her God, and was soon seen walking with her in the way everlasting."

But there are, in most cases, other members of the household besides the parents—the BROTHERS and SISTERS—who also require attention and right conduct from "The Young Woman at Home." A loving, united, harmonious family, I repeat again, where, while the children are all devoted to the comfort of their parents and of one another; where each is studious to perform all kind offices, and to please the rest, and all seek the happiness of each, is one of the loveliest scenes to be found in our di

vided and discordant world. Dr. Watts has taught us this from our childhood:

> "Whatever brawls disturb the street,
> There should be peace at home."

Much, very much, depends upon the daughters for this domestic harmony. They can exert, if prudent, good-tempered, and obliging, a softening influence over the minds and manners of their brothers. A sisterly affection, judiciously displayed, is one of the sweetest and most powerful ingredients in the cup of domestic enjoyment. True it is, that it will require occasionally some little self-denial, and sacrifice of personal gratification, predilection, and feeling, to conciliate the affection, and secure the good-will of brothers, who are apt to begin too soon to feel that they are "the lords of the creation;" and thus to keep the peace of the family. But a girl of good sense and affectionate disposition will go a great way in this direction. Woman is made to yield, though not to be trampled upon. Her gentle nature is formed for submission, rather than for resistance. A good and wise sister will feel this, and her very affection will, in most cases, be her protection. Let her put forth the thousand little arts of ingenuousness, of which she is, or may be mistress, and throw the silken cords of love over her brothers' hearts, and she may do much to attach, and in some cases even to subject them to her, and make them fond of home. A husband is but too apt to run away from the home which is

tenanted by an ill-natured wife; and brothers have been often driven away to company, by cross, sullen, unaccommodating sisters. I am aware that it is but too frequently the case, that young men are polite and attentive to every female but those they every day meet at home, and scarcely any one has to complain of a want of civility and complaisance but their sisters. At the same time it must be confessed, that some young women have themselves to blame for this, for it does require more virtue than is ordinarily found, to be very much attached and attentive to such an impersonation of pettishness, ill-humor, and vanity, as some silly girls present at home. How many parents' comfort is disturbed, and their hearts half-broken, by the jealousies, envies, and contentions of their children.

The elder daughter, especially if she be older than her brothers, also has a larger share of responsibility attaching to her than belongs to any other of the children, just because her influence is greater than any other. She does almost as much to form the character of the younger branches as the mother, and when the latter is feeble and inefficient, perhaps more. It is a lovely sight to behold an intelligent and affectionate girl, yet not authoritative or dictatorial, exerting a plastic power over her younger brothers and sisters, setting them a beautiful example of filial piety, and lending all her efforts to uphold parental authority over them, conciliating their confidence by her judgment, and their affection by her kindness—throwing a softening

and gentle influence over their ruder and harsher natures, and compelling the parents to say, "She is a second mother to the family." Ye senior daughters, behold your pattern!

The SERVANTS must not be left out of consideration. These add much, very much, to the comfort or disquiet of families; and they are considerably influenced, not only by the conduct of the parents, but by that of the children. Were I speaking to young men, I should remind them of the distance, without pride—the kindness, without familiarity—the purity in thought, word and deed, which is incumbent in all their conduct—which is necessary to be observed in *their* conduct—toward *female* servants. But I am speaking to young *women*, and therefore remind them that the three things to be practiced are *kindness*, *considerateness* and *confidence;* and the three to be avoided are *haughtiness*, *oppression*, and *familiarity*. A young woman displays considerable littleness of mind, as well as forgetfulness of the laws of God, when she treats a servant with scorn and contempt, as being of an inferior nature. Perhaps, at the same time, that servant may have not only a finer form and a stronger mind, but a holier heart and a diviner taste, than she who treats her with supercilious disesteem. In every thing the servant may be superior except in rank. Nor is this the only kind of ill-treatment that servants are sometimes doomed to bear from their *young* mistress, and, alas! sometimes at the cognizance of their *old* mistress too.

Women of high rank and title are brought up with the notion, and the practice also, that they are to do nothing for themselves, and they are usually provided with a waiting-maid to do every thing for them; to whom her place would be a sinecure, if her mistress did any thing for herself. But for others in the middle life to be brought up in helplessness, is a discredit to the mother, an injury to the daughter, and generally a cruelty to those who are called to minister to them. Such a system of aping the manners of the nobility, where there are scarcely means to command help for the ordinary duties of a tradesman's household, is indeed contemptible. Mothers, I speak to you. Train your daughters, not to be fine and helpless ladies, but to be useful wives, mothers, and mistresses. Be yourselves patterns in these things, and propose the pattern for the imitation of your daughters. See to it, that they learn to help themselves in all proper matters, and do not allow them to press too hard upon the energies of your servants. Much will depend upon you in this matter. And do you, my young female friends, enter warmly and wisely into this subject yourselves. Do not affect the fine lady, or wish to be only a kind of dressed doll, to be carried about and played with by others. I do not ask you to do any thing to demean yourselves below your rank and station, or any thing that would degrade you in the eyes of the servants themselves; but still be ambitious to grow up in a state of independence, and in a preparedness to make

your way through life, even against difficulties and privations, should you be called to meet with them. Your own happiness, as well as the comfort of the servants, demands you should be as considerate and give as little trouble as possible. It was certainly a happy invention for mistresses when bell-hanging was invented, but a great misery for some servants, in whose ears the jingle of the parlor or bed-room bell is ever going. "What," says many a thoughtless young woman, "were servants given for but to wait upon us?" And what were young limbs given *you* for but to wait upon yourselves? It would do some young persons good, if for one year, at least, they were without a servant at all, and had every thing to do for themselves. How much better, how much nobler than this inconsiderateness, is the kindness which not only avoids giving trouble, but that, also, which leads a young woman, in addition to attending to her general comfort, to teach a servant to read and write, and to take the oversight of her education in things important for her to know, especially the subject of personal religion.

But there is another thing on which a few remarks should be made, and that is, the undue familiarity which young women sometimes contract with female servants. Kindness, to whatever extent it may and should be carried, and whatever offices it leads to, does not imply companionship: a good and wise servant will not wish it, and knows her place too well to make the attempt. It is only she whose mind is as artful as that of her young mistress

is weak, that will seek to gain ascendancy over her, and to become her confidante. "A young lady," says Mrs. Copley, "would very much degrade and injure herself by choosing to make a servant, however respectable, her familiar associate, the vehicle of gossip or scandal, the partner in her jokes, the confidante of her affairs. Such intimacies are most prejudicial, disgraceful, and perilous. Many a young lady, who thought it no harm to listen to the flattering tales of an artful servant, about her beauty and her conquests, has been led on to receive from her hands the seductive letter, to fall in with her contrivance for clandestine interviews, and at length to complete a marriage without the knowledge or approbation of her parents, and in its results ruinous to herself. Where things have not been carried on to this disastrous extremity, much levity and imprudence have resulted from such unprofitable and unsuitable intimacies, which have occasioned unpleasant reports and surmises at the time, and have formed matter of painful reflection in the mind of the individual, long after the connection has been dissolved, and the danger escaped."

I now suggest some other matters, partially implied in what we have already advanced, but of sufficient importance to be brought out into full view. Among these must be mentioned AMIABILITY: in other words, that sweetness of temper which is ever seeking to please, and to avoid whatever would offend. There is a saying, that "Temper is every thing." This is going too far, since there is no doubt

a good temper is sometimes associated with bad principle; while on the other hand, there are many high-principled and noble-minded individuals, who are troubled, equally to their own annoyance and that of their friends, with infirmities of temper. Still, though not every thing, good temper is a *great* thing. No doubt very much depends in this matter upon our physical organization, for we see the same difference in the brute creation that we observe in the human species. But this, though an explanation, is not an apology: because reason and religion may do much, and in myriads of instances have done much, to correct and improve a disposition naturally bad. Begin life, then, young women, with a deep impression of the value of good temper, both to your own happiness and to that of the persons with whom you have to do, especially the family circle. Study your *own* temper. Know well what it is you have to contend with in your own case, and set yourselves most diligently to subdue it. Be mistress of your temper. Bad temper is a generic phrase, of which there are several species—as, for instance, there is a *peevishness* or petulance about some persons which makes them susceptible of offense, not of either a very deep or passionate kind, but an irritability which disposes them to be hurt at little things, and to *complain* of the conduct of others, rather than to have their resentment excited. Then there is the *violent* temper, which is excited by some supposed or real offense to sudden ebullitions of wrath, sometimes even to a

storm, or what we call being in a *passion*. There is also the *sullen* disposition, which, on being contradicted, opposed, or reproved, sinks into a silent, moody, and inwardly resentful state of mind. Persons of this turn will sulk for hours, if not days; retiring into themselves, they will brood over the matter which has occasioned this unhappy state, till they have actually made themselves ill by their bad temper; and yet, if expostulated with, will assert they are not ill-tempered, but only "*hurt*." This is the disposition which, more than any thing else, is an interruption to domestic peace. I am no apologist for stormy passions, or for those that indulge them, but those who are soon in a blaze, and *as* soon cooled down, and the fire extinguished, are not so inimical to the peace of a family, as they in whose heart the embers of ill-will are kept long smouldering under the ashes, and not suffered to go out. But besides these, there are other varieties of temper which are sadly inimical to domestic peace. There is the *selfish* disposition, which leads its possessor ever to be seeking to concentrate the regards of the family upon herself, especially if subject to indisposition. All must bend to her, and every hand be employed by her. Her will must be consulted in every thing, and her comfort be the study of all. She must engross the affection of the parents, the regard of the brothers and sisters, and the time, attention, and labor of the servants. This is sometimes fostered by injudicious parents, who excite the envy and jealousy of the

other branches of the family, by this exaction from all for the sake of the one. True, where there is much indisposition, the sufferer *should be*, and usually is, the center of sympathetic attention; but where the ailments are slight, and especially where the patient is apt to exaggerate them, she should not be petted into an engrossing and exacting selfishness; but should be gently taught to have a little regard to the comfort of others. In addition to these, there is the *jealous* and *envious* disposition, which contends not only for pre-eminence, but for monopoly; which accounts as a rival every one who receives the least special notice, and dislikes her on that account. What petty passions of this kind often creep into families, and poison all the springs of domestic happiness. Consider how much the tempers of its members have to do with the peace of a household—how much of sunshine one sweet and lovely disposition, constantly in exercise, may throw over a household; and on the other hand, how much of cloud, and gloom, and storm, one passionate, sullen, selfish, or envious temper may bring over the little community at home.

My young friends, begin life with a deep conviction—and you can not have it too deep—of the importance of this subject. A bad temper will torment you through life. With this, you will carry your own curse with you everywhere. It will multiply your enemies, and alienate your friends; it will becloud your reason, and hinder your religion, it will embitter your comforts, and envenom

your trials; it will make you unhappy *at* home, and procure for you distress *from* home; it will give you wretchedness at the time, and conscious guilt and painful reflections afterward; it will deprive your days of peace, and your nights of sleep; in short, a bad temper will be to the soul what a chronic and painful disease is to the body—a constant source of uneasiness and distress—with this difference, that whereas the former is a visitation from God, the latter is our own doing; and while one to the Christian brings its own consolation with it, the other brings nothing but punishment and shame.

To make home happy, you must, of course, *be conformed to its general rules.* This, perhaps, it is less necessary to insist upon in reference to you, than it is to your brothers, because you are less in danger than they of infringing upon domestic order. Every well-regulated family has its laws and customs, its times and seasons, its government and authority. These *must* be observed, if the little community be kept in order and good condition. I will suppose it is a pious family, where God is worshiped, and the morning and evening sacrifice are duly offered upon the domestic altar. At the appointed hour, all ought to be present. Nothing can be more unseemly than to see one member after another come dropping in while the Scriptures are being read, as if the Bible were only the prayer-bell to call the family together for worship. I have often witnessed this, and have heard the objurgation of the father to his dilatory children, whose want

of punctuality had been occasioned only by a wretched, slothful habit of lying late in bed. It has really in some cases given rise to domestic quarrels. Much the same remark will apply to other matters. The father of a family may see reason to object to the late hours of the present day, and may request that all his household shall be at home by a certain hour of the evening. It may be thought by his children he is too precise—too antiquated in his notions—too inconsiderate of their gratification—but still it is his law; he is master of his house, and they are his subjects, who are to obey. It is quite unseemly for the children to be ever maintaining a struggle against paternal rule and maternal counsel. On the contrary, it is the glory and the praise of a good and dutiful child to find what sacrifices of feeling and gratification she can submit to, rather than commit herself to a struggle with parental rule and domestic government. On the other hand, parents should be very careful not to make their yoke oppressive, and their burden heavy. The laws of the family should not be too stringent, nor the authority of the parent tyrannical, capricious, and unnecessarily precise. But they must be obeyed as long as they last, and the elder branches of the family, where there *are* younger ones, should excel in leading them, both by example and precept, to this habitual conformity to household law.

If you would *make* home happy, you must, of course, *be* happy at home. No one can diffuse joy

who is not joyful. The passions are infectious, because the heart is sympathetic. Cheerful persons make others so, and so does the gloomy one, just as the sun irradiates by his beams, or the clouds darken by their shadow, the whole landscape. A young person whose heart finds its resting-place in the domestic circle; whose sympathies are with household scenes; whose chosen companions are her parents, and her brothers, and sisters; whose pleasures are the sweet interchanges of domestic offices and affections; whose loved employment it is to make her daily contribution to the comfort of the little community within doors; and whose good-humored disposition radiates from smiling eyes, and flows from gently-curled lips—such an inmate is a blessing to the house in which she dwells. The soft music of her speech, aided by the genial influence of her accommodating and insinuating temper, sheds a benign influence on all the family. But observe the opposite to all this—the girl that looks round upon her home as a prison rather than a paradise, and seems to think that to stay at home is a penance rather than a pleasure; from all which she is anxious to escape, and is ever seeking opportunities to effect her purpose. Her gloomy aspect, her sullen disposition, her discontented air, her repulsive taciturnity, her peevish expressions, when she does break silence, her unsympathizing isolation—what a member of the family is this! She has there no associates, no objects of strong affection, nothing to engage and interest her heart; but

is ever seeking occasions to slip away, upon any pretense, or into any engagement. She is ever on the watch for opportunities or excuses for absence; ready for any errand; eager for every business that opens the door for her egress. She is not happy but in a continual round of parties, visits, or out-of-door novelties, of which this fertile age is so prolific. Any society, rather than that of the family, and any scenes rather than those of home, suit her taste. Can such a young person make home happy? Yes, if a specter can do it—for such, or little better, is *she*. Young people, I repeat, *be* happy at home. Parents, put forth all *your* ingenuity to make them so, by investing home with its proper attractions. Mothers, this devolves much on you. Be you "keepers at home," for a gossiping mother is sure to make gossiping daughters. Let it be seen that *you* are happy at home, in the midst of your families. Put on a cheerful countenance, that your children may love to bask in the sunshine of your smiles. Be the center of attraction to your families, and let the household delight to revolve in sweetest harmony around your maternal chair.

Industrious habits will contribute greatly to the happiness of home, especially on the part of a young female. Slothfulness is a wretched thing, not only as regards the subject of it, but as affecting others. A lazy person can not be a happy one. Indolence is a constant opposition to the law of our being, which is made for activity. That there is a species

of indulgence connected with it, is true; but it is a very mixed kind of gratification, for as it is against nature, there is sometimes a consciousness of this, which awakens the conscience and inflicts remorse. To the remonstrances of conscience are added the reproaches of others; and as it can not always be indulged, there are the repugnance, the lassitude, the *vis inertiæ* to be overcome, which makes the least exertion of indolence more wearisome than far greater efforts of activity. Slothfulness is a miserable object to look at. The very sight of it inflicts pain upon an industrious person. What a misery is it to an industrious mother, to see the dull, heavy, immovable habits of a daughter, whom neither entreaties, persuasives, nor rebukes can quicken into activity, or excite to industry—who, if moved at all, must be moved like a stone up hill, by main force, and which, without the same effort to keep it going, is ever rolling back again into its former place: a poor, lumpish creature, who is enough to wear out the patience of the most forbearing and affectionate mother on earth. Such a habit must be destructive of domestic happiness. It may not come into the family with the noise, and destructive force, and fury of a hurricane, like the profligacy of a prodigal son, but it settles down upon its comfort like the silent power of a blight or a mildew. It is a constant vexation, which eats into the very core of a mother's heart, when she finds that a daughter who is grown to an age when she ought to be a relief to maternal labor and solic-

itude, is a heavy increase to both. This wretched habit may be overcome, and it must be, or you will be a poor, helpless, useless, unhappy creature through life. If indolent in your parents' house, what are you likely to be in your own. An idle daughter is likely to make an idle mother; and from my soul, I pity the man who is tied for life to a lazy, indolent woman. No personal charms, no mental acquirements, no brilliancy of conversation, can make up for the want of domestic industry: and, indeed, these things are rarely found in the absence of industry, for indolence is usually too lazy to acquire knowledge; the habits of soul and body being in sympathy with each other.

It is essential to your making home happy that there should be much *self-denial*—a spirit of forbearance—an occasional surrender, for the sake of peace, of supposed rights—a willingness to forego what you could righteously claim as your own. I am aware there are limits to this, especially in cases where concession pampers tyranny and invites oppression. There may be brothers, and even sisters, whose disposition is so encroaching that it should, by parental authority, be resisted on behalf of the weaker and more yielding members of the household. It is, however, far better in some cases to concede rights, when the sacrifice is not too costly, and does not involve a violation of principle, than to contend for them. The contest, even where it is successful, often costs more than it is worth—the victory does not pay for the battle

Be, therefore, content sometimes to lose a little for the sake of retaining a great deal more. I can not give you a piece of advice more conducive to your peace at home, or to your comfort through life, than to be ever ready gracefully and quietly to bear with the infirmities of disposition of those around you, and to yield in little things what you deem belongs to you, rather than disturb the peace of the family by contending for them.

Nearly allied to this is the importance of never seeking *to engross an undue share of parental affection.* Let there be no ambition to be a favorite, nor any arts to obtain this distinction. Some young people have made home miserable in this way. They have been base and guilty enough to attempt to rise in the esteem and affection of their parents, by little arts of detraction in reference to their brothers and sisters; and some parents are weak enough to encourage the attempt. Partiality is then not only cherished but manifested. Envy and jealousy ensue. The peace of the family is destroyed. Abhor this conduct, and be content to share with other branches of the family your parents' justly-apportioned regards.

Recollect that your power to contribute to the happiness of home does not depend on the performance of rare and great services, which do but very seldom occur, but in attention to little things, which are ever transpiring. Our existence as to time is made up not only of years, but of moments our body as to bulk, not only of limbs, but of par

ticles . our history as to events, not only of great events, but of little occurrences: and our obligations, not only of splendid acts of duty, but of seemingly insignificant ones. Set out in life with a deep sense of the importance of little things, or, rather, with a conviction that where character, duty, and happiness are concerned, relating not only to ourselves but to others, nothing is little. This applies especially to your conduct in the family. In that little world, then, keep up a constant attention to what will constitute the felicity of the passing hour. True politeness has been defined to consist in "*benevolence in trifles.*" It is a beautiful definition, and is worthy of being remembered by all who would fill the family circle with bliss. By politeness here I do not mean the heartless and unmeaning ceremony of the world, such as is taught by Lord Chesterfield's pages; nor even the graceful polish of manners which characterizes the intercourse of well-bred people; but a gentle, obliging demeanor and delicacy of behavior toward all around; that mode of conducting ourselves toward others which is opposed to all that is coarse, vulgar, rude, and offensively familiar. The politeness that I mean is not affection's root, but it is its flower, beauty, and fragrance; or if not the plant itself, it is like the hedge round it, which preserves it from being trampled under foot. In the family circle all the little acts that can give pleasure or pain, yea, all the words, tones, and looks, should ever be considered and weighed. Woman has, perhaps, more tact

and discernment in reference to the minor affairs of life than man. Her mental eye is more discerning, her touch more delicate, her taste more refined on all matters of behavior. Let her, therefore, keep up this in reference to the conduct at home. Mrs. Copley, in dwelling upon this, has the following reference to her own history: "Might I be permitted to say, that after the lapse of twenty-six years, a sensation of pleasure thrills through my fingers, when I recollect the daily task of tying on my father's neckcloth, and combing back my mother's silvery locks." * * * "But we return to the more ordinary circumstances of young females, resident under the parental roof, after having finished the term of their education; and observe, that their conduct should be marked by a soothing forbearance and tenderness toward the infirmities of their parents. Deafness, lameness, dim-sightedness, and other infirmities of age, circumscribe their pleasures, and, perhaps, a degree of fretfulness is sometimes observed. But a dutiful child will be fertile in expedients to extend their pleasures, to alleviate their privations, and to bear with and soothe their infirmities. The prompt eye will discern their needs, and anticipate their wishes. The needle will be threaded before the eye aches with endeavoring, and before the sigh is excited by inability, to accomplish it; or, by gentle and playful persuasion, the needle-work will be exchanged for knitting or netting. The leg-rest or the footstool will be presented or exchanged before complaint of uneasiness

is uttered. The large-printed Bible and the spectacles will be placed at hand; the dim columns of the newspaper will be read aloud; the inquiring eye will be answered by a repetition of the conversation, or of the sacred address, which, uttered by a stranger's voice, had passed over the dull ear; and in the most exalted sense, the benevolent pleasure will be enjoyed of being eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, ears to the deaf, and causing the trembling heart to sing for joy."*

I now return to the idea with which we started —that the right conduct of a "daughter at home," is to study to make home happy. There is, my young friends, a fascination in the very expression —A HAPPY HOME. And so far as what may be called the poetry of home scenes is concerned, is there a lovelier flower to be found in this garden of earthly delights, this paradise of sweets, than a good daughter and affectionate sister, adorning her maiden charms with the virtues that become her sex, her age, and her relationships, and elevating and sanctifying all her other excellences by a saintly piety, which makes her lovely in the eyes of God by all the beauties of holiness? Her father's pride,

* These extracts are from an anonymous work published by the Religious Tract Society, entitled "Female Excellence," which was written, as well as many others, by that admirable woman. If the productions of her pen had not the brilliancy of many other writers, they are all adapted to usefulness. By her decease the female part of the community have lost one of their ablest guides

her mother's comfort, and her brother's companion, she is the ministering angel of them all. How much of bliss does that one dear object of their common affection throw over them all! Her absence is mourned as a common loss, and her return to the family circle is hailed as the restoration of a suspended enjoyment. This loved one has been loved by another that belongs not to the family, but who is about, through her, to be united with it. With what a treasure, at their expense, is he about to enrich his own home. Their hearts, at the thought of parting from her, bleed from wounds which nothing but the hope of her happiness could heal. Her removal leaves a blank, which, as they look upon her vacant seat, calls up recollections, and produces a sense of deprivation, which even her happy union can scarcely appease. But as woman's mission is to make happy the home of her husband, she is now gone forth to fulfill hers. Well has she been trained, and well has she trained herself, also, at her mother's home, for this home of her own, where all the united excellences of the good daughter and the good sister now develop and blend in the more mature and matronly virtues of the good wife, mother, and mistress; and she who, as "the young woman at home," contributed so largely to the felicity of one family circle, was preparing to contribute still more largely to the felicity of another, and that other is her own. Behold, my young friends, your pattern. May the imitation of it be your study, your prayer, your bliss.

The Young Woman away from Home.

"Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest."—GENESIS xxviii. 15.

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and he shall direct thy paths."—PROVERBS iii. 6

"Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."—PSALM lxxiii. 24.

THE hour of separation from parental society, home enjoyments, and the scenes of early history, is in most cases, and ought to be in all, a season of pensive grief. No affectionate daughter *can* leave the house of her father, and go from beneath the covering wing of maternal love, without passing over "the bridge of sighs." Even the joys of the bridal morning, when she quits the arms of her hitherto nearest relations, to throw herself into those of one now still nearer, do not prevent her from looking round with something of instinctive regret on the scenes she is leaving, now no longer hers; and amid the smiles of the happy bride, are seen falling the tears of the loving child, like dew-drops sparkling in sunbeams. It would augur ill for the husband, if his wife could part from her parents, even for him, without a momentary pang. It is one of nature's loveliest sights to see in that

scene and season of delight, filial piety blending its luster with conjugal affection, and investing even nuptial charms with new and captivating beauty.

But I now speak of a different kind and purpose of separation from home. I contemplate the young woman, not led out by that right hand, the "cunning" of which is to be employed for her support; nor going away, leaning upon that arm which is to be continually stretched over her for protection, but departing solitarily and mournfully on the journey of life, to meet alone its dangers, cares, and toils. It is sad enough to see a young *man* quitting his father's house, and leaving home to earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow; how much more to see a young *female* thus go forth to seek her own support. What is it but a lamb venturing out into the wilderness where wolves abound; or a young dove quitting its nest to fly abroad, amid eagles and vultures. How many in the progress of life, and amid its changes, some of which are so melancholy, look back to the hour of separation and exclaim, "Oh, my mother, how sad and certain presages of what awaited me were those bitter tears I shed on that morning when I tore myself from thy embrace! My heart then sunk, and the sun of my life then set never to rise. Every step since then of my dark journey has been one of sorrow; and every change, but of one calamity for another."

In some cases separation from home is rendered necessary by a change in domestic circumstances, and she who was brought up ever so tenderly amid

the luxuries, and with the prospects of opulence, is now compelled to quit scenes where she was a stranger to toil and care, to earn her own support. It is a sight to be looked upon with admiration, to behold a young woman in these circumstances, instead of hanging upon parents no longer able to support her without additional privations for themselves, nobly resolving to relieve them of this burden, and instead of sitting down in despairing grief and helpless sorrow, bracing her mind to meet the privations of her altered condition, descending gracefully to her lower level, and going forth with true magnanimity, inspired by religion, to tread life's stormy wave alone. No morbid sense of degradation; no feeling of false shame, arising from humbled circumstances; no haughty sense of humiliation connected with a situation of subordination and dependence, benumbs her faculties, paralyzes her energies, or renders the duties of her new situation irksome and oppressive; but remembering it is the will of Providence, and thankful for her health, her abilities, and her opportunities to take care of herself, she goes to her situation without dread, despondency, or reluctance.

Others meet with no such reverse, but are brought up amid circumstances which have always kept before them the probability that they must go out into the world to earn their own support. In these cases, it comes not upon them by surprise, and if they are wise they will endeavor to prepare their hearts, and qualify their minds for this change of

residence. A judicious mother's energies and vigilance, will ever be employed not only in helping her daughters, but in teaching them to help themselves. Wherever there is a probability of their leaving home, and even where there is not, her anxiety, considering the vicissitudes of human life, should be directed to the point of qualifying them to be self-supporting. And it should be a point of ambition with every young woman, whose parents can, with difficulty, support their family, not to be burdens to them, but to take care of herself in some honorable and useful occupation. It is a very beautiful scene to witness a young female not only supporting herself, but endeavoring, by the produce of her diligence, and the savings of her frugality, to minister to the comfort of aged, infirm, or impoverished parents. Many a filial heroine has left home, and endured privations neither few nor small, for this purpose. All her discomfort and labor are endured with patience, under the idea that by this means she is rendering the home of her beloved parents more happy. Here, however, a caution is necessary against a too great eagerness to get away from home. A large family, where there is a straitened income, brings many cares, and some privations, not only upon the mother, but upon the elder daughters. In such a case, for a young woman who can be of essential service to her mother, and whom her mother wishes to retain, to determine or even wish to go out into the world, and leave her mother to struggle and almost faint under the load, is a

deplorable want of filial piety. It is delightful to hear a daughter say, "Any where, or in any circumstances, abroad or at home, in single or in wedded life, my beloved and honored parents, I am ready, and willing, and eager to serve you."

There is another and melancholy occasion, which not unfrequently occurs, for a young woman's leaving home, and that is, when home itself is broken up by the death of both parents. How frequently does this happen! Ah, how often are families invaded by the last enemy, and scattered hither and thither by his desolating ravages! The grave covers both father and mother. The dear, domestic hearth is forsaken. The family gatherings at prayer, at meals, at festive seasons, are over, and the house of your childhood and youth is deserted. Poor orphans, I pity you; especially ye orphan *girls*, my heart bleeds for you. Your brothers can shift for themselves better than you can. But even you have no need to despond. Painful I know it is to have no parent no home, no settled place of abode. Often, in your forlorn situation, you must and do say, "Alas for me—I am alone in the world. David's expression suits my case. I am like a pelican in the wilderness; or like a sparrow, alone, upon the house-top. Other young people, though away from home, have a home to think and talk about; and parents to write to, and occasionally to visit. I have none. I have not a house to dwell in, except that which I may soon be required to leave; nor have I any friends, except those which

my own good conduct may secure. My heart is often more desolate than my condition; and though I am in the midst of society, I feel as if I were alone in this great and busy world." But I remind you there is the orphan's unfailing friend still left. God lives, and he is the father of the fatherless. Be it yours, and it may be yours, to say, "*When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.*" Should you be wise and happy enough to become truly pious, you will never be without a friend, and in the absence of an earthly father, will have an omnipotent one in heaven. You may then set forth in life, and go through it, adopting as your motto the reply of Abraham to Isaac, who, when the latter said, "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" replied, "God will provide." Be that *your* motto, "*God will provide.*" Fear God, and you may without scruple, and with confidence, adopt this assurance.

Permit me now to suggest some topics which apply alike to all these different cases, and which it is important you should dwell upon, either in prospect of leaving home, or when you *have* left it.

Consider it is in the order of Providence you should be thus situated. Your lot is fixed in heaven. It is God's will, and not chance. Is there nothing consolatory in *that?* Consider his wisdom, power, and goodness. He does all things well. He knows what is best for you. He may, in ways you can not imagine, be consulting your future and permanent good. You see not the end. When

this is revealed, you may be compelled to exclaim, "He leadeth the blind by a way that they know not, and leadeth them in paths that they have not known. He maketh darkness light before them, and crooked things straight." Submit, therefore, without envy of others, and without murmuring against them. Would you contravene his purpose? Say, therefore, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good in his sight. I am where he would have me be."

But remember there are not only *privations* to be endured away from home, but moral *dangers* also to be encountered. If these are not so pressing in your case as in that of your brothers, there *are some* perils even in yours. Happily for you, the guards of female decorum, propriety, and reputation, are stronger and more strict than those of the other sex. But they have proved too weak for absolute security in thousands of instances. Multitudes who have stood well *at* home, have unhappily fallen, when removed from it. Eve was tempted when alone, and away from the protection of her husband. Alas! how many have gone away to sin, and have returned to hide their shame! A mother's watchful eye is no longer upon you, a father's arm is no longer stretched over you, and the shelter of home no longer protects you. Others know this as well as you, and may take advantage of it. And even if there were no danger of *vice*, is there none of *imprudence*, folly, levity? None, of bad connections, improper acquaintance, ill-contracted

marriages? None, of Sabbath-breaking, of undue love of pleasure, of vanity? Are not the prevailing faults and defects of some women their vanity, their love of dress, their disposition to court attention and admiration, their fickleness, their inconsiderateness, their love of novelty, their want of judgment, their curiosity? And are not all these likely to increase rather than diminish, when they are away from the checks which home supplies? Are not these weeds likely to grow faster, and to attain greater strength, when there is no mother's eye to see them, no mother's hand to pluck them up? All this danger is greatly heightened where there are personal or mental accomplishments. A beautiful young woman, withdrawn from the fostering care and ceaseless vigilance of a judicious mother, and exposed abroad to the rude and licentious gaze of the world, is ever an object of alarm to others, and it were well if she were so to herself. It is, perhaps, a rare case for such a female to be ignorant of her charms; it is rarer still for her to be more afraid than vain of them, and to be more anxious that they should not lead her into danger, than that they should secure for her admiration.

The great source of CONSOLATION and PROTECTION to a young woman from home is—*true religion.* It is very possible and very easy to any one, especially to any one who has known the comforts of home, to conceive of the privations and the discomfort of some young persons, whether sustaining the character of a governess, a shop-woman, or a

servant. The cold, proud, and, perhaps, in some cases, cruel treatment of their employers, as contrasted with the affectionate conduct of their parents; the annoying and unfeeling peculiarities of their companions in the house, contrasted with the sympathizing and loving behavior of their brothers and sisters; the disregard of their comfort in what concerns their food, lodging, and general personal convenience, as contrasted with all the accommodations and enjoyments of their father's house; and the general inattention and neglect of the strangers among whom they dwell, as contrasted with the recognition and kind notice of a wide circle of friends in their own native place—this, all this, is bitter indeed. Some hard and unfeeling natures, or gay and frivolous ones, would be insensible to these things, but O that poor girl of softer mould, whose heart was made for home scenes, and whose bliss was derived from home enjoyments—why, under all this, her heart is sometimes ready to burst. What thoughts disturb her peace, like visions of bliss lighting on her gloomy and sorrowful path, and then instantly vanishing, only to leave the path still more gloomy, and the darkness still more oppressive! What letters, wet with her tears, she writes to her own sweet home, and to her sympathizing parents!

What is to comfort her? Only the balmy influence of religion, the consciousness that she is in the way of duty, and the testimony of her conscience that she is discharging her obligations with scru-

pulous fidelity. This can, and will. She whose heart is truly renewed by Divine grace, who has genuine faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, who walks with God as her divine, unchangeable, omnipotent Friend, and communes with him as her Heavenly Father, whose affections are set on things above, and who considers life as a probation for eternity—she will find, in such a state of mind, a source of consolation, a means of endurance, an element of happiness, which will counterbalance all discomfort, disquietude, and distress. With true dignity she will bow to the will of God, and consider her situation as his appointment. She will find satisfaction in submission. Her religion will impart something of cheerfulness, and much of patience; it will control her temper, and throw an air of loveliness over her character, that will give her an interest in the heart of her employer. In your Bible and other good books, my young friends, you will ever find companions; in your closet of devotion, and in communion with God, a sweet retreat from the coldness and unkindnesses of your fellow-creatures; and in meditation upon your everlasting rest above, a blessed substitute for the comforts of the home you have left on earth. Faith in God, in Christ, in Providence, in Heaven, *can* comfort, *has* comforted, *will* comfort, in the dreariest situations of life, and in the bitterest agonies of death. I am anxious you should set out in life with this lofty idea of true piety, that it can sweeten the bitterest cup of human woe, can soften the hardest lot, and can

be a substitute for all other pleasures. It must be so; for it made Adam happy in Paradise, and makes saints and angels happy in heaven. It has lighted, as with a lamp kindled in heaven, the confessor's dungeon, has sustained the Christian fugitive in his exile, and has made even the agonies of the stake to be tolerable to the martyr.

Adopt religion, then, young women, as your companion, for it will not only comfort you, but also protect you. Yes, it will be a shield for your defense, as well as a cup of consolation amid your sorrows. Expect *temptations*, for you will certainly have them in one way or other. You can not even imagine in what shape or from what quarter they will come. It may be in a form so fascinating, so plausible, so unsuspected, so insidious, as to contain all the "deceivableness of unrighteousness." Do not imagine that Satan respects female virtue too much to assail it. Did he thus respect the holiness of Eve in the garden of Eden? Does he reverence any character or any virtue—did he not tempt our Lord? The more spotless the character, and the more eminent the excellence, the more intense is his hatred, the more malignant his envy, and the more eager his desire to despoil it. Has he not tempted to their ruin multitudes as pure as you are? Against such a foe, whom all but infinite cunning makes skillful, and boundless success makes bold, consider yourselves safe only under the protection of Omnipotence; and that protection can be obtained only by faith and prayer. Of those

millions of instances of female frailty which the history of your sex has presented, not one would have occurred if they had trusted their virtue to the keeping of true godliness. It is religion that will repel the fiercest assault with the holy and indignant remonstrance, "*How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God!*"

It is not only, however, from such dangers as these—dangers affecting moral character in its most important features—that religion will protect you, but from the lesser ones also, which, if they do not lead to vice, are still injurious. Religion will moderate your love of pleasure by furnishing pleasures of its own. It will check your vanity and folly, by producing a devout seriousness and sobriety of mind, without at all destroying your natural and innocent vivacity. It will remove your inconsiderateness, and make you thoughtful and reflective, without stiffening you into formality, or investing you with gloom. It will induce habits of forethought and frugality, and thus guard you from present imprudence and recklessness, and future improvidence and extravagance. Do not, then, venture out into the world unprotected by this spirit as your guardian angel.

There are one or two other cautions which it may be of importance you should receive and remember. You should never allow yourselves for a moment to imagine there is any thing *dishonorable* or *degrading* in your being compelled to leave home and to support yourself, either as governess, shopwoman,

or servant. Those who have been in better circumstances are, of course, *most* apt to feel this. And no doubt it *is* a descent—a lower status, according to the conventionalities of human life: but it is no dishonor. It is from misconduct, and not from misfortune; from loss of character, and not from loss of rank, that disgrace arises. Nobility of soul is often associated with plebeian descent; while vulgarity of character is sometimes covered with the coronet or the crown. A virtuous, holy, and intelligent young female in the heraldry of heaven has a patent of nobility, and is one of God's peeresses in her own right. Industry is far more honorable than wealthy indolence; and she who willingly, honestly, cheerfully earns her own support, when Providence has deprived her of her patrimony, is far more to be admired than she would have been, had she been still rolled through life in her father's equipage, and obsequiously waited upon by servants in livery.

Akin to this is another state of mind against which you should most sedulously guard, and that is, a conviction, or any thing approaching to it, that you must be *miserable* away from home. It is conceded that you can not be as happy away from home, as you would be *at* home. It is not right you should be. There *can* be no perfect substitute for a united and happy family circle. But, then, when called by Providence to surrender it, give it up with submission and fortitude, and yield to the privation with true magnanimity. Let it be said

of you on leaving, as was said by Milton of Eve. on her departing from Paradise—

"Some natural tears she dropped, but wiped them soon."

Weep you may, you ought, at giving up the dear delights you have enjoyed from childhood in your father's house; and can not but sometimes feel pensive at recollecting the friends from whom you nave been separated. But to allow your love of home to make your absence from it an intolerable wretchedness—to render you moody and melancholy, discontented and ill-tempered—to unfit you for business, and make you unpleasant to your employer and companions, this is proof of a weak mind, a feeble heart, and a sickly character. Rise above it, my young friends. If Providence calls you away, bear it with composure. Go out expecting to meet with privations, and make up your mind to endure them with fortitude. Make the best of your situation. Doom not yourself to misery on this account. You may be happy *any where*, by religion, good temper, submission to your lot, and usefulness. If you determine to find out the pleasure your present situation affords, instead of ever looking back upon that which you have left—if you resolve by God's grace, to please and be pleased—if you give up your mind to piety, industry, and usefulness—you will find that felicity is a flower that blooms, a fruit that grows, away *from* home as well as *at* home. A cheerful spirit, like a lamp lighting any darkness into which it may be carried,

lessens the discomfort of any situation, recommends you to your employer, and promotes your interest as well as your happiness.

Perhaps it may not be amiss to say a few things on the choice of a situation, which, indeed, appertain to your parents, where they are living, as well as to yourselves. *Let the subject be made the matter of earnest and believing prayer to God.* "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths." "Commit thy way to him, and he shall bring it to pass." These are precious declarations, and they are sustained by promises no less precious. "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way"—Psalm xxv. 9. "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye"—Psalm xxxii. 8. With such exhortations and assurances, what should be your resolution? "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel." There is Providence in every thing. Even your mear affairs are under Divine direction. *Your* times are in his hand. Do not doubt it. Hold fast the truth, that God hears your prayer, casts your lot, and fixes the bounds of your habitation. Pray, pray earnestly, believingly, and expectingly. All situations and all hearts are at his disposal.

In selecting, accepting, and retaining a situation, *consult its religious advantages.*

In these is included an anxious desire to obtain such means of *pulpit religious instruction* as are likely to build up a young disciple on her holy

faith, and to quicken into activity the principles of godliness planted in the soul by the Spirit of God. It is not ordinarily desirable, where a selection can be made, to choose a situation where even the minor matters of sacrament and church government differ from those to which she has been accustomed. It exposes her, if not to a change of sentiment, yet to an antagonism and a perplexity, which are unfavorable to the quiet enjoyment of her own personal religion, and may do her some injury by producing a spirit of controversy. Where the differences of opinion are of a more serious kind, affecting even the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, no pious young person should expose herself to a hazard of this kind.

I will now address a few special counsels and cautions to two or three classes of those who are in the situation contemplated by this discourse.

There are many occupied in the very important and responsible duties of *a resident and permanent governess.* This is a situation of both delicacy difficulty, and momentous consequence, and requires much wisdom, prudence, and conscientiousness. There are many parties concerned, all of whose interest and comfort should and must be consulted. You who are in this situation owe something to *yourself.* There is a respect due to you from those who have engaged you, which they will be most likely to pay when they see you respecting yourself. If they so far confide in you as to intrust you with the education of their chil

dren, they ought to treat you in that manner which will teach *them* also to confide in you and esteem you. But this will depend much upon your own conduct and bearing. Let them be duly aware that you expect all that belongs to you in the way of kind and respectful conduct, but that you expect no more. Any apprehension on their part that your demands of this nature are too high, or are preferred in an obtrusive and exacting spirit, will be sure to set them on their guard against an encroaching disposition, and dispose them to yield you *less* than your due. A kind, attentive, respectful, and dignified bearing toward them, as far from servility on the one hand as it is from familiarity on the other, as well as a right behavior toward their children, will, in most cases, accomplish all you wish. If you have come to your present situation by a descent from a former one far above it, let there be no such sense of degradation and mortified pride; no such hauteur or loftiness, as shall make you gloomy, dissatisfied, unhappy, and repulsive. Even should it appear that you have exchanged places with your employers, that they once were in the situation of dependence you now occupy, give no evidence that you are aware of it, and take no notice of little ebullitions of vulgarity, or even the purse-proud insolence not uncommon to those who have risen in life. If sometimes you can not be insensible to this, and you feel your spirit rising within you, and your cheek growing flushed and warm, so as to show yonr mortification, call in your

religion to your aid, comfort yourself in God, and exemplify the Christian in a spirit of meek forbearance. In such circumstances, many a tearful look will be thrown back by memory on that home from which by misfortune you have been driven out, or, rather, by Providence, and you will need to retire to calm your perturbation and repress your indignation. In such cases go, and by prayer invite the hand of your Heavenly Father to wipe your weeping eyes, and compose your ruffled peace and agitated heart.

Then there are the *children* intrusted to your care for their education. Enter upon such a task with a deep and solemn sense of responsibility to them, to their parents, and to their God. Abhor the meanness, the injustice, and the cruelty of merely teaching them for hire, and of being satisfied with any manner of discharging your duty, so as you get your board, your salary, and your respectful treatment. The future character and comfort, for both worlds, of those girls, depend much upon you. They have been placed in your hands, and now look up to you as their instructress and oracle. As you would give in your account at last to God with joy, and not with grief, do your very uttermost, tax your energies, to do them and their parents justice, in instructing their minds, forming their character, and fitting them for the station they are to occupy in life. Prepare yourself for your task by constant reading and study. Do not be satisfied with your present qualifications. The education of a rational and immortal creature, for this

world and the next, is a great work. Improve your own mind, to be better fitted to improve theirs. Win their confidence by your ability, their affection by your kindness, their reverence by your dignity, and their application by your diligence. Let your aim be, not only to communicate knowledge, but wisdom; not only to store the memory, but to strengthen the judgment, to nerve the will, and to make the conscience tender; not only to teach them to think correctly, but to act with propriety, discretion, and promptness, in any situation in which they may be placed.

As regards religion, this, of course, must depend much upon the views of the parents. If these are similar to your own, and you have unrestricted liberty on this point, labor to the uttermost to form the *religious* character of your youthful charge. Ever consider the education of an immortal being incomplete without instruction in that which alone can fit her for immortality. But never act the part of a covert zealot, by inculcating principles opposed to those of the parent. I should say to a religious young woman, go into no situation where your are not allowed to teach what *you* consider to be the truth as it is in Jesus. Do not conceal your sentiments, and then teach them secretly and stealthily. You would abhor such conduct in a Roman Catholic—do not be guilty of it yourself. Of course you could not conscientiously teach what you believe to be error, and should not; therefore do not go where you would be required to do so.

Then come the *parents* to be considered by you. Of course you will do every thing you can to uphold their authority, even as they ought to do their uttermost to uphold yours. You should also most assiduously labor to secure the affections of their children for them, rather than for yourself. It would be treachery of the basest kind to steal away the hearts of their children to yourself. Your aim should be to secure the love of the children to you, for their parents' sake, as well as your own; and then love to their parents, for your sake, as well as for those to whom it primarily belongs.

There is another thing to be observed, and one which I shall touch upon with the delicacy it demands; and that is the fact, that a *wife* has sometimes been made uncomfortable by the residence of a governess. Jealousy, it is true, is sometimes more predominant in this case than it need be, and is suspicious without reason. But are there no cases in which uneasiness is not entirely the result of an over-sensitive and morbid imagination? Respect your own character and dignity, a wife's peace, and a husband's honor, too much, even to covet, to seek, or to accept attentions, even though playful and innocent ones, which may excite uneasiness in that one bosom, the tranquillity of which is so easily disturbed. Conduct yourself so as not only to be without blame, but also without suspicion.

Apart from this, do nothing by becoming the depository of secrets, hearing tales, or uttering

insinuations, to loosen the bonds, or violate the affection of husband and wife, or to disturb the peace of the family. If, unhappily, a schism *should* exist, keep yourself as much as possible out of the way, or let your wisest and kindest offices be exerted to heal the breach. Win for yourself the blessing which will come upon the peace-maker, and cause the family to bless the hour which made you a member of the household. Recollect, you are bound in honor never to make the transactions or condition of the family matter of conversation with others. Without being actually sworn, or even pledged, to secrecy, you are solemnly bound to observe it; and are a traitress to the family which has received you as an inmate, if you make their affairs known to others. Never intermeddle with the servants, and especially avoid all unnecessary familiarity with them. Keep to your own sphere, and diligently discharge your own duties. You will find sufficient scope here for all your time, your energies, and your anxiety.

For such a course of conduct, seek by prayer the grace and wisdom which come from on high, and under all the trials of your situation—the waywardness of the children, or the ingratitude, the pride, and the petulance of their parents—seek the comfort which cometh from the Father of Mercies, and the God of all consolation.

Governesses in a school are a class of young females, who, though acting under the direction and supervision of another, and therefore, being less

responsible than those who reside in a family, have very important duties to discharge, and for which high qualifications, both intellectual and moral, are essential.

I now consider the case of *those young persons who are employed in our retail shops.* These form a very large class. Their situation is often one of far greater discomfort and moral danger than that of the class just mentioned. In addition to the oppressive and exhausting labor which modern competition imposes upon them, in common with all who are engaged in trade, they have to bear, in some cases, the unkindness of their employers, who are not unfrequently deplorably wanting in regard to the comfort of those whom they have received into their service, both as to food, lodging, and general treatment. A surly master and his unfeeling wife, intent only upon what they can get out of the flesh, and bone, and muscle, of their servants, and caring little for their welfare; never satisfied with even the most exemplary diligence and competent ability, and therefore ever urging to greater labor, and ever uttering the language of complaint; always suspicious, even where there is no ground for it, of the honesty of their servants—such are the trials which some of these hapless young people have to bear. In such a case, you to whom it appertains, need comfort. The recollections of home, where all was kindness, comfort, and confidence, embitter, by the power of contrast, the ills you have to endure. Bear all with as much patience as you can obtain.

Seek consolation in true piety. Carry your sorrows to God by prayer. When the bitter contrast between your situation *at* home and *from* home forces itself upon your thoughts, and sends the tear to your eye and the thorn to your heart, go to Him whose gracious presence is ever with you, and His infinite love ever ready for you.

But it is not thus with all shop-keepers. I am not describing the class, but only some of its members—the exceptions rather than the rule. I know of heads of retail establishments, employing a large number of young people, who cherish for them something of the feelings of parents, and who regard them almost in the light of children. Nor is it their temporal comfort exclusively, but also their spiritual welfare, which is the object of their solicitude. And this is obviously their incumbent duty. Exceptions to this, however, do exist, and it is therefore well to have them thus arraigned and exposed as beacons to warn others.

Whether your employers be generous and kind, or neglectful and oppressive, do your duty; and seek to possess all those qualifications which shall commend you to their esteem. Diligence is indispensable. It is the first excellence of one in your situation. Be anxious to please, and as earnest to serve your employer, as if the business were your own. No one will or can employ an indolent servant. Be an early riser. Comply with all the rules of the shop. Aim at excellence. Seek to be clever. Cultivate an attractive, winning, and ever polite

address. Be in the best sense of the term a clever shop-woman. Especially let your honesty be above suspicion. Deem it no insult or reproach that I caution you on this subject; you are exposed to temptation. Money in small sums is continually passing through your hands; your salary may be low, and under the deceitfulness of the heart you may be so convinced of the injustice of your small stipend, as to imagine it to be almost lawful to pay yourself, and thus supplement what is wanting. Resist every temptation of this kind. Rather starve and die, than appropriate an article of clothing, or of decoration, or a farthing of property of your employer to your own use. As a guard upon your integrity, and a check to temptation, avoid expense in dress and ornament. Vanity is an insatiable passion, and it is this, more than any thing else, which has led to dishonesty. A taste for finery was fostered and indulged, the salary was too small to yield the means of its gratification, and it impelled its victim to acts of pilfering to supply the deficiency.

In some establishments, though it is not now common, young persons of both sexes are employed. Where this is the case it brings new perils, and requires additional caution. Your honor, your respectability, your safety, require that you should be most anxiously upon your guard. How earnestly as well as sincerely should *you* present those beautiful petitions of our Lord's prayer, "Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil." Avoid

all undue familiarity, all flippant and trifling conduct, all unrestrained jocularity, with the young men who may be employed in the same establishment. Maintain a proper self-respect, a becoming reserve, and a dignified bearing, which shall be a fence around your character, and prevent even the most distant approach of any thing that would insult your purity or offend the most fastidious modesty.

You have need to be upon your guard against the influence of companionship even from your own sex. In large establishments, or even in those of more moderate size, there are many young women associated together, over whom, in some cases, no matronly superintendent is placed, and who have an almost unrestricted opportunity for free conversation and general intercourse. It is no severe reflection on the sex to suppose that in such a number of young persons, there may be some who have no personal religion, whose sense of female decorum and propriety is not the most delicate, and who, without being vicious, are still so given to levity, vanity, and romance, as to exert an unfavorable influence over the rest. Be upon your guard against influence of this kind. Gain all the good, in the way of improvement, you can, from those who are your superiors; but avoid all the evil. Be good-tempered, accommodating, amiable, and conciliatory; but set yourself against all that is improper. Be an example of all that is good, and then you may be a reprover of all that is evil. Let there be

no affected superiority; nothing like "Stand by, I am holier than thou;" but all the consistency, the gentleness, the sweetness of unaffected goodness, of true piety and good conduct, and then you may be a blessing indeed to those around you. Be especially careful in the selection from the rest of your companions of one particular friend. Be not led away by specious appearances, nor induced to commit yourself by professions of friendship on the part of another, or by the first feelings of partiality on your own; but take time to ascertain the correctness of her principles, the consistency of her conduct, and the respectability of her family; otherwise you may be led into snares and dangers which you very little anticipate.

For your conduct toward those who employ you, if it be a master, I refer you back to what is said to the governess. Instances have occurred to my knowledge to prove that cautions on this head are not altogether unnecessary. An evil eye has sometimes lighted on an unsuspecting female, and men, bound by every tie of honor and by their solemn vow to a wife, have been base enough to assail, and in some instances to destroy, the purity, the honor, the peace, if not the life, of those whom they were bound in duty to protect. Spurn, then, with disdain and indignation any such attempts—receive no special attention from, and quit the service of, the wretch whom you suspect of a design against that which ought to be dearer to you, a thousand times over, than even life itself.

Female servants are a most mportant and a very numerous class of young women away from home, and often a very destitute and much exposed one Their case, however, is so needful of enlarged counsel and caution, that I shall refer them to a Tract I have written and published specially for their benefit.*

I shall now conclude by some few general remarks, which will apply to all classes alike of those who are away from home.

Again and again I say, commit yourselves by true faith in Christ into the hands of God for protection and consolation. How many beautiful passages and examples of Holy Scripture, in addition to those already quoted, could be adduced, which apply with peculiar force to your case. Look at poor Hagar, much to be pitied as well as much to be blamed, alone in the wilderness, "when the angel of the Lord found her by the fountain of water, and she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me." If, notwithstanding some misconduct and some self-reproach when God found her there, she comforted herself in that desolate place with the consideration that she was compassed about with the presence of the Lord; with how much greater confidence and peace may *you* cheer your heart with the thought of an ever-present God, you who have not been driven out as she was by misconduct from her home, but have been led out by Providence from yours. Yea,

* "Advice to Female Servants."

God is in every place—he is with *you*—"he compasseth your path, he knoweth your down-sitting and up-rising, and is acquainted with all your ways." You have left your earthly father, but your heavenly one is with you. You are far from your earthly home, but if you are a Christian, you are as near as ever to your heavenly one. The eyes that lately beamed affection upon you, see you not now, and you see not them; but lifting your voice to God, you can say, "*Thou God seest me!*" His eye is upon you—his heart yearns over you—his arms are underneath you. Then, what promises are on record for you. Do you fear the want of adequate provision?—"Trust in the Lord, and do good! so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed"—Psalm xxxvii. 3. Do you want protection?—"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler"—Psalm xci. 1, 4. Do you need direction?—"Thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it"—Isaiah xxx. 21. Do you dread the forlorn circumstances that await you away from home?—"None that trust in him shall be desolate"—Psalm xxxiv. 22. Are you trembling with apprehension at the absence of all that were dear to you, and the unknown difficulties of your new situation on earth?—"Fear thou not, for *I* am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy

God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness"—Isaiah xli. 10. "My presence shall go with you and give you rest." Do you even dread the idea of being forgotten by the friends you are leaving?—"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee"—Isaiah xlix. 15. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"—Hebrews xiii. 5. Can any thing be more consolatory than such assurances? Need you be afraid to *leave* home and go out into the world with such promises? What! when omnipotence, omnipresence omniscience, all-sufficiency, and boundless love, go with you? Why, with such assurances you may quit not only your father's home to dwell in some other part of this land of railways, and easy and speedy methods of return, but may embark on board an emigrant ship, quit your native country to dwell at the antipodes, and exultingly exclaim, "If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me." But, then, to apply the truth and feel the comfort of these precious assurances, you must have that genuine faith which alone gives you a title to them. Personal religion will in all probability procure you earthly friends wherever you go, for it is the soil in which all those virtues grow that conciliate affection, insure respect, and invite confidence. God

will go before you to prepare the way for you, for when a man's ways please the Lord. he maketh "even his enemies to be at peace with him." Remember how he gave Joseph favor in the eyes of the governor of the prison, and how he turned the heart of Esau, brooding revenge, into brotherly endearment. The best way to get the friendship of man is first to secure the friendship of God.

Connected with this, acquire an eminent degree of those general good qualities already alluded to. Add to piety amiability of disposition, kindliness of temper, gentle, artless, and attractive manners. Let there be a substratum of the solid gold of excellence, bearing at the same time the polish of the amenities of life. They who have to make their way in the world must be attentive to external, and to what some may call little things. It is not enough to be holy and virtuous, or even to be conscious that we are such, but we must also be attractive. You must aim to please. Real excellence may sometimes be repulsive on account of the eccentricities, the acerbities, and blunt coarseness, with which it is associated. It is like grapes amid nettles or thorns, which few will attempt to gather for fear of the sting or the prickle. There is a word of very difficult definition, but which is perfectly understood, and very impressive, *without* being defined—"She is an *interesting* young woman." This is a very common expression. Perhaps the best explanation of it is, the power of giving pleasure and engaging affection. This includes, I am

aware, more of nature than of art, and something of personal attraction. The *affectation* of being interesting is sure to defeat its own end and to inspire disgust. Yet something, if the intention be concealed, may be acquired by study. Surely it can not be improper to ask, "How can I interest others in my behalf?" And they who depend upon the interest they create for themselves in the hearts of others, should study how to insure it.

Combine a due and tender recollection of home with a noble fortitude in surrendering its comforts. You are not required to forget your father's house, and your mother's endearing society. It would be unnatural if you could. Indeed, you are in little danger of this: "Forget thee, my honored father! Forget thee, my much loved mother! Forget ye, my brothers and sisters! Forget thee, sweet home of my childhood! Oh, no. Memory must perish before I can be guilty of such oblivion. I muse on ye all in my solitary walks. I give up many an hour's sleep to think of home. I wet my pillow with my tears, as I think of the years and joys that are gone, never to return. I dream often that I am in the midst of ye all, and wake to the sad reality that I am away from home." But this is not all the recollection you are to bear. Nor is the frequent and affectionate letter, so welcome and so precious to those who love and think of you, the only way to send comfort to your parents. Let there be the never-varying excellence of character and conduct, the uniform good behavior, the grow

ing usefulness, which, on their knowing these things, shall comfort their hearts. Let no fickleness of disposition make you soon tired of a situation—let no unsuitable connection of a tender nature, which they would not approve, be formed—let no conduct which, if they knew it, would distress them, be carried on by you. They have lost the comfort of your society; add not to the affliction by causing them to lose the comfort of your character.

And now, to conclude, let your situation in a social point of view remind you of your circumstances in a religious one. If you are a true Christian, what is your condition on earth but a child away from home? Yes: heaven, and not earth, is the home of the believer. How simply and sublimely beautiful is the language of our Lord: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also." Delightful idea! Heaven is the home of the Christian, which the Saviour has fitted up and made ready for him. There, is God the judge of all—the Father, of whom the whole family is named. There, is Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, who calls himself the First-born, the Elder Brother. There, are the spirits of just men made perfect, the whole number of the brothers and sisters. There, is the innumerable company of the angels, who were as ministering spirits sent forth to minister

unto the heirs of salvation. What a glorious household assembled in the third heavens—the eternal home of the redeeming God, the Great Redeemer, and the redeemed family. Thither you are going, if a true believer. All the dispensations of Providence, and all the means of grace are preparing you for that station. All things are working together for your good. Your present situation, with all its disquiet and discomfort, may be among the means which are preparing you for that state. You are away from home here, that you may be at home there. Let this cheer and comfort you. When distressed by looking back upon the home you have left, comfort yourself by looking on to that to which you are going. Heaven, glory, eternity, are before you. You are educating for your father's house—preparing to go in and dwell forever in his presence. Half a century hence at most, and in perhaps a much shorter time than that, it will be of no consequence to you how you passed through life. The only thing about which you should be supremely anxious is, not to be shut out from the heavenly home; not to be excluded by sin, impenitence, and unbelief, from the mansions which Christ has gone to prepare. In the blessed hope of reaching that state, though they were ten times greater than they are, you might endure not only with fortitude, but with comfort all the trials of A YOUNG WOMAN AWAY FROM HOME.

Character of Rebekah.

'And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee. And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also So I drank, and she made the camels drink also.—GENESIS xxiv. 45, 46.

EVERY one must be struck, we should think, with the construction of the narratives in the Book of Genesis, and their adaptation to the then existing state of the society to which they relate. Their verisimilitude guarantees their truthfulness, and explains their peculiarity. We find all that charming simplicity which the social condition of the heroes and heroines of the tale supposes, together with all their defects in conduct which their partial instruction might be expected to bring with it. Another kind of narrative, more in conformity with the modern advances and artificial refinement of society, would excite suspicion of the truthfulness of the story: its simplicity and its difference, from all we know of subsequent ages, are its verification.

Where shall we find, in all the range of fiction, any thing so exquisite as the history of Joseph, or even as the beautiful story contained in the chapter which furnishes the example to be contemplated in this discourse. We invite criticism and taste to the investigation of this precious portion of Holy Writ. True, it relates rather to the history of a family than of a nation. Yes, and it is worthy of remark, that the careful preservation in the museum of inspired chronicles, of this little gem of historic narrative, was by the Spirit of God thought to be of more importance than all that was going on at that time among the great nations of antiquity, not excepting Egypt, the birth-place and cradle of science. The secular historian delights to emblazon *his* page with the conflicts of empires, the exploits of heroes, and the prowess of armies; but what is the influence of such narrations upon the moral habits, social happiness, and individual character of mankind, compared with that of the record of the holy courtship of Isaac and Rebekah!

Sarah, the beloved and faithful wife of Abraham, had died, and had been laid in the cave of Machpelah. Sadness and desolation now reign in the patriarch's household. His tent is empty; and the grief of Isaac, who loved his mother most tenderly, is unsoothed, upon whom the heart of the venerable widower was now turned with more concentrated affection. Isaac, the miraculous child of promise, though forty years of age, was unmarried. The holy patriarch, amid much domestic disquiet, the

consequence of polygamy, had known the happiness of possessing a faithful and devoted wife, and he now became naturally anxious to see his beloved son well settled with a companion in life before he himself should go the way of all flesh. His solicitude, however, was not merely that Isaac should be married, but *well* married; which, in his view, meant not wealthily, but religiously. He was a worshiper of Jehovah, and abhorred idolatry, with the votaries and practices of which he was on every hand surrounded; and it pierced his heart with anguish to think of the child of promise contracting a marriage with one of these. He knew that character, as well as happiness, depends upon a suitable connection. And more than this, it was not only a private matter of personal and family arrangement, involving Isaac's happiness and the comfort of his father, but also a public concern intimately affecting the covenant of which Abraham was the earthly head, and the countless millions who were to be blessed in his seed. Isaac sustained a sacred character; he was the child of promise, and inherited, and was also to transmit, the promises concerning the Messiah. As he had relations in the land of Mesopotamia, who worshiped the living God, he determined to send his confidential servant to this family to engage a wife for Isaac. We must suppose, of course, that all this was under the cognizance of Isaac, and met with his cordial support. Parental authority was then more extensive, and filial submission to it more exemplary, than it now

is. Parents, according to the custom of those times, chose wives for their sons, and husbands for their daughters; and often were regulated in their choice more by regard to wealth and rank, than by the adaptation and affection of the parties to be thus united. We do not wish this custom to be revived; it is unnatural, and reduces marriage to a matter of bargain and sale. But we do wish parental counsel, consent, and approbation to be always sought in a matter of so much importance to all parties, whether directly or more remotely concerned.

The trusty servant selected by Abraham proceeded on his delicate, difficult, and, to both the father and son, momentous mission. Not, however, till religious solemnities had been observed, and Eliezer had been commended by the patriarch to God by prayer. If we wanted the character of a faithful servant, delineated to the life, where could we find a picture so perfect as this man? I shall not follow him through his long and wearisome journey of nearly five hundred miles, nor will I dwell upon the anxious ruminations of his mind during the weeks it occupied. Yet we can not but imagine how constantly that mind was lifted up to God for protection, direction, and success. He at length arrived at the city of his destination. It was a summer evening, and espying a well outside the walls, he stopped to give his camels drink before he passed through the gates. Aware that it was the custom for the young women to come and draw

water for household purposes, he first placed his camels by the well in a waiting posture, and then betook himself to prayer for Divine direction. "And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water; and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also, let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master." It is noticeable, that he did not fix the sign upon the one who should first offer her services, but upon the one who first willingly grants the service asked of her. In this he proceeds wisely, conceiving, it would seem, that the maid shows no maidenly spirit, who, unasked, tenders so slight a service as a draught of water at a public well to a stranger; and deeming, perhaps, that attention so paid might be an excuse for curiosity, and an evidence rather of officious forwardness than of an obliging disposition. This is worthy of notice, as furnishing a beautiful comment upon Solomon's advice, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." Let us thus begin, carry on, and end, all our works in God. What is begun in prayer, usually, as in this case, ends in praise. So thought Eliezer, when he knelt down by the side

of the well of Nahor, and poured out this simple and beautiful prayer. In *his* case it might be well enough, but ordinarily it does not become us to ask, much less to prescribe, special tokens by which God shall indicate his will.

Having presented his prayer, he waited for the answer, and waited in faith that he should receive it. He did not wait long. There came a damsel, with a pitcher upon her shoulder, toward the well. By her appearance, perhaps by an impression from God, he is possessed with the idea that she is the person sought, and that the Lord hath answered his prayer. He therefore addressed her in the very language he had resolved to employ, and received the very answer, which was to be the sign of her being the object of his mission. The gentleness, cheerfulness, assiduity, and courtesy, manifested toward a stranger, of whom she could have no knowledge, are truly admirable—unmixed and uncorrupted as it was by any unbecoming forwardness or levity. It was frank, without being obtrusive—kind, without being familiar. She neither ran away affrighted from his presence—for her innocence gave her courage—nor did she step beyond the decorum of her sex, nor allow her courtesy to infringe upon her modesty. It was good for Rebekah, that she did not answer with a proud and haughty contempt and a surly refusal. "Yes, and it was good for another woman, who long after met another stranger, 'wearied with his journey,' at another well, that when she met his request, 'Give me to drink,' with

the surly question, 'How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me who am a Samaritan?'—it was good, I say, for her that she had a different person from Abraham's servant to deal with." The words in which Rebekah's answer is described, are picturesque, lively, bland, and respectful: "Drink, my lord; and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand. And when she had given him drink, she said, I will draw for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hasted and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw, and drew for all the camels." Conduct so amiable overwhelmed Eliezer; and so slow of heart are we to believe in the answer of our prayers, that he, "wondering at her, held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not." There are cases in which the mind, like the eye, by a great and sudden influx of light, is overpowered. It was so here. Finding, at length, that this was indeed the object of his journey, he could not repress the feelings of his full heart, but expressed them in two ways. The first has, in all ages and in all countries, been considered as one inlet to the female heart—that heart which has, at any rate, been *thought* "to be accessible to finery, presents, and praise." "For it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden ear-ring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands, of ten shekels weight of gold." But this was not the only expression of his joy and gratitude, for,

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of the well of Nahor, and poured out this simple and beautiful prayer. In *his* case it might be well enough, but ordinarily it does not become us to ask, much less to prescribe, special tokens by which God shall indicate his will.

Having presented his prayer, he waited for the answer, and waited in faith that he should receive it. He did not wait long. There came a damsel, with a pitcher upon her shoulder, toward the well. By her appearance, perhaps by an impression from God, he is possessed with the idea that she is the person sought, and that the Lord hath answered his prayer. He therefore addressed her in the very language he had resolved to employ, and received the very answer, which was to be the sign of her being the object of his mission. The gentleness, cheerfulness, assiduity, and courtesy, manifested toward a stranger, of whom she could have no knowledge, are truly admirable—unmixed and uncorrupted as it was by any unbecoming forwardness or levity. It was frank, without being obtrusive—kind, without being familiar. She neither ran away affrighted from his presence—for her innocence gave her courage—nor did she step beyond the decorum of her sex, nor allow her courtesy to infringe upon her modesty. It was good for Rebekah, that she did not answer with a proud and haughty contempt and a surly refusal. "Yes, and it was good for another woman, who long after met another stranger, 'wearied with his journey,' at another well, that when she met his request, 'Give me to drink,' with

the surly question, 'How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me who am a Samaritan?'—it was good, I say, for her that she had a different person from Abraham's servant to deal with." The words in which Rebekah's answer is described, are picturesque, lively, bland, and respectful: "Drink, my lord; and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand. And when she had given him drink, she said, I will draw for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hasted and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw, and drew for all the camels." Conduct so amiable overwhelmed Eliezer; and so slow of heart are we to believe in the answer of our prayers, that he, "wondering at her, held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not." There are cases in which the mind, like the eye, by a great and sudden influx of light, is overpowered. It was so here. Finding, at length, that this was indeed the object of his journey, he could not repress the feelings of his full heart, but expressed them in two ways. The first has, in all ages and in all countries, been considered as one inlet to the female heart—that heart which has, at any rate, been *thought* "to be accessible to finery, presents, and praise." "For it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden ear-ring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands, of ten shekels weight of gold." But this was not the only expression of his joy and gratitude, for,

unrestrained by the presence of Rebekah, "He bowed down his head and worshiped, saying: Blessed be Jehovah, God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master, of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, Jehovah led me to the house of my master's brethren." Did the heart of Rebekah, true to instinctive perception in all such matters, begin to divine what this present and this praise to God meant? Did a thought glance across her mind of the nature of this man's visit to Nahor? Or was the scene beheld by her in awe and wonder at the character and errand of the mysterious stranger? She must have known of her august relation, Abraham, whose name she now heard in prayer from the lips of Eliezer.

We must, for a moment, forget Rebekah, to look upon this holy, faithful, loving domestic. Never did piety and fidelity more truly blend the sanctity of the one with the devotedness of the other. Happy master, to have such a servant! Happy servant, to be blessed with such a master!

It is not necessary for me to enter very minutely into the incidents of the scenes which followed. How Rebekah hasted with the intelligence of this event to her father's house, and how Laban, her brother, went forth to greet the stranger and conduct him to their home. We mark, as if we saw them, the courtesy of the opening interview, the frank interchange of kindly greetings and good offices, the admirable delicacy of the servant's introduction of himself to the family of Bethuel, the

servant's impatience to discharge his trust, the simple recital of what the Lord had done for him, and the full development of the object of his visit. Upon hearing which, Laban, as the surviving representative of his father, replied: "The thing proceedeth from the Lord; we can not speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken." This was dependent, as the after part of the narrative shows, upon the damsel's consent. To help to gain this, a second splendid present was prepared for her, of jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment. This was, and is still, the Oriental custom of contracting all bargains, and entering into all covenants, whether for marriage, trade, or politics. Very natural was the remonstrance which the brother, and especially the mother of the bride, addressed to the impatient servant of Abraham, when he said: "Send me away to my master." And her brother and her mother said, "Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go." Whether it be a respite of ten days, or, as some say, of ten months, or even years, that the mother joined with her son in soliciting, before the daughter bids her a last adieu, it is a touch of genuine tenderness, such as we should not willingly lose from the narrative. For it is a narrative which proves its own truth by its being so thoroughly, and all throughout, true to nature. Rebekah was now called in, and the question placed to her,

"Wilt thou go with this man?" Was she deficient in virgin modesty, in prudence, in thoughtfulness? Did she display an unseemly haste to become a wife? Did she venture too carelessly to commit herself and her happiness for life to one of whom she knew nothing but by report? Did she not take the decisive step in the dark, when she consented to peril in such haste the comfort of her life, upon the truth of the singular embassy that had come to her? In ordinary circumstances, we should unquestionably reply in the affirmative to these questions; and we should earnestly recommend to all young females now, and to all who have the care of them, whether parents or guardians, more delay, inquiry, and caution, than were observed in this case. Hasty offers of marriage should be met either by hasty refusals, or lengthened consideration. It is too momentous an affair to be decided without much investigation and reflection. But there was a peculiarity here. Something, perhaps, may be justly imputed to the times, but far more to the religious state of Rebekah's mind; a sense of duty overwhelmed a feeling of reluctance, together with every inferior consideration. She was doubtless in the habit of daily intercourse with God, and in fervent prayer had sought Divine direction; she saw an overruling Providence—God was in the affair—his finger, visible to the eye of faith, pointed out the way in which she should go; and with unhesitating obedience, she confessed her readiness to part with all the felicities of home, to seek a dis-

tant alliance, at the voice of that Sovereign Power to whom she committed her future destiny. Flattering as the scene before her must have appeared to a worldly eye, the sacrifices she made at this moment of compliance were certainly very considerable. What could have led to such an answer, when standing between the tears of parental and fraternal affection, and the urgency of a mere stranger, the *servant*, too, of her future home, but a faith which overcame the world, and dictated her holy resolution. *Heaven* appointed her journey, and *nature* pleaded in vain.* That religion had something to do with it, I have no doubt—that the promptings of the female heart had also some influence, I have as little doubt. "What woman," says Monod, "under a sense of her dependence, has not wished, once in her life, for the arm of a man to support her, and his name to shelter her? But at the same time, what woman, under the feeling of reserve, has not kept her secret closely shut up within her own bosom, waiting silently till she is sought for, even though she should wait till the hour of her death, hastened, perhaps, in some cases, by that internal fire by which she would be consumed within, rather than suffer it to be blazed abroad. The invariable order of marriage, which cedes the initiative to man, and does not accord even the appearance of it to woman, is not a refinement of civilization; it is not even a nicety of the gospel; it is a law imposed on woman in every

* See Dr. Cox's "Female Scripture Biography."

age, not excepting the most barbarous, and among all people, not excepting the most savage." Rebekah partook of this feeling, but she worshiped the true God, and lived amid those who worshiped idols, where, perhaps, few opportunities of a holy union presented themselves; and now a most advantageous one offered, in which all that piety could desire, or even vanity crave, were combined; which, therefore, required little or no time to deliberate upon, and she at once consented to accompany the servant of Abraham.

Rebekah took leave of her friends, and proceeding on her eventful journey under the care of Eliezer, and accompanied, both for her comfort and her protection, by Deborah, an old faithful servant, who had nursed her from a child.

For a moment we leave Rebekah, proceeding on her journey, to speak of her future husband, of whom good Bishop Hall says, "Of all the patriarchs, none made so little noise in the world as Isaac; none lived either so privately, or so innocently; neither know I whether he proved himself a better son or husband. For the one, he gave himself over to the knife of his father when about to be offered up in sacrifice, and mourned three years for his mother; for the other, he reserved himself in chaste forbearance twenty years, and prayed." He appears to have been a quiet, retiring, domestic, and devotional character—good rather than great, and altogether blameless, with the exception that he was a little too much addicted to the gratifications of the palate.

"It was a calm and peaceful summer evening. The oxen have been lodged in their stalls, and the implements of husbandry are at rest in the furrows of the field. Not a breath of wind rustles in the noiseless leaves. Not a stray sheep wanders in the dark shadow of the hills. It is a time of profound repose. One solitary figure is seen slowly pacing the sweet-scented meadow path. Unconscious of nature's charms, altogether his soul is melted into sweet harmony with the peace that reigns all around, he is wrapt in holy fellowship with the God of his salvation." It is Isaac, "who had gone out into the fields to meditate." No improper oratory for the good man, who, surrounded by the glories of creation, looks through nature up to nature's God.

In such an exercise and such a frame of mind, Isaac was well prepared to receive the best possible earthly blessing—a good wife. Perhaps he was then meditating upon Eliezer's mission, and beseeching Heaven for its success. Behold the answer of his prayers! A cavalcade is seen in the distance approaching. It draws nearer and nearer. Can it be the return of Eliezer, the faithful servant? And are there not two females in the retinue, one young and the other further advanced in life? The vision of his future wife now flashed through his imagination, as the procession drew nearer, and his eyes with fixed attention rested upon the beauteous form of Rebekah. "And who," says Rebekah, whose eyes are as busy in looking toward Canaan as Isaac's are in the direction of Mesopotamia, "is that meditative man

approaching us?" The secret is disclosed by the faithful, joyful Eliezer. "Your future husband." As she approached her destined lord, see how female delicacy, how maiden diffidence and reserve, resume their empire. "She alighted off the camel, and took a vail and covered herself." This act had more meaning than one; it expressed her subjection, as his already espoused wife, to him as her future husband: it would also prevent that confusion which the suddenness of the interview and the important consequences that were to follow it, would naturally produce. "And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." In this tender manner does this admirable story close.

Peace be to that dwelling, the residence of a dutiful son, and a tender husband, and of a kind, generous, open-hearted, pious wife. Dutiful sons promise to be affectionate husbands; and were I a woman, and received an offer of marriage, one of the first inquiries I would make concerning the man who solicited my hand and heart, would be, "How did he behave to his mother?" feeling assured that conjugal affection could scarcely be expected to dwell in that heart from which filial regard had been excluded. He who is insensible to a mother's tender affection, believe me, my young friends, is not to be intrusted with the care of a woman's heart and happiness. "We may here pause and remark, that all the circumstances continue to make

this portion of the sacred record peculiarly attractive. In reading it, we feel at home amid these patriarchal incidents and descriptions, realizing them as if they were familiar. The stately pomp and ceremony—the reserve, and coldness, and suspicion, of a more artificial, social state, pass away. The freshness of nature's early truth and tenderness returns—artless, guileless, fearless. We breathe a purer and freer air. We are touched with a deeper sense at once of a special Providence in heaven, and of a real and true sympathy on earth. We feel that there can be such a thing as the exercise of a frank and generous trust, relying both upon God and upon man; and that it is possible to act upon the belief both of God's superintendence, and of man's sincerity."*

Before we consider what is to be learned from the conduct of Rebekah as a wife and a mother, we will for a few moments contemplate her in reference to that act which made her such—her marriage. The circumstances connected with this were peculiar to the times, and partook of a simplicity, as we have already remarked, to which your history, my young friends, is not likely to supply a parallel. One thing, however, may be noticed—it was with the privity and consent of her friends. We can not account for the fact of Bethuel, Rebekah's father, being passed over in silence, and Laban, her brother, only being mentioned as conducting the

* Dr. Candlish's Contributions toward the Exposition of the Book of Genesis.

transaction, but upon the supposition that Bethuel was dead. It is true the *name* occurs once in the history, but this probably was a brother. Laban was consulted. There was nothing clandestine in it. And, moreover, it was a marriage in which the claims of religion were considered. On this delicate subject I can not enlarge. *If* Rebekah showed too great an eagerness for quitting the single state, and somewhat too hasty a decision, from which, however, we have exculpated her, we do not recommend this to you. It may be natural enough to prefer the married to the unmarried state, when an opportunity offers for entering into it. But let not your minds be unduly restless and anxious in realizing the object of your wishes. Avoid all romantic and poetic imaginativeness on this momentous affair. Do not allow yourselves ever to treat it with levity, or to dictate a line of conduct which would look as if you were more anxious to be a wife, than to be qualified for such a state. Never come to the conslusion that you can not be happy if you are not married, and can not but be happy if you are. Let the multitude of happy maidens, and the equal number of unhappy wives, correct such mistakes, and dispel all the illusions with which the idea of connubialism disturbs the propriety of some young women's conduct. Treat the whole subject not as a matter of poetry and romance. but as one of the gravest realities of life. It is an affair of *love*, but it is also an affair of *prudence*. It is a matter of *taste*, and even of poetic delightful

ness; but it is also a matter of judgment and of conscientiousness. It is not a thing to be laughed and joked about, but to be pondered in the deepest recesses of the soul, and prayed over in the most solemn seasons of devotion. It is momentous to both parties, but most so to the woman. "Life or death, felicity or a lasting sorrow, are in the power of marriage. A woman, indeed, ventures most, for she hath no sanctuary to retire to from an evil husband. She must dwell upon her sorrow, and hatch the eggs which her folly or her infelicity hath produced; and she is more under it, because her tormentor hath a warrant of prerogative, and the woman may complain to God, as subjects do of tyrant princes; but otherwise she hath no appeal in the causes of unkindness. And even of the man we may say, though he can run from many hours of his sadness, yet he must return to it again, and when he sits among his neighbors, he remembers the objection that lies in his bosom, and he sighs deeply."*

This is no time, nor is there room, to lay down many rules for your guidance in this affair. When, however, it comes in your way, consult not only your heart, and your imagination, and your young companions—but your judgment, your God by prayer, and your parents for advice. Enter into no acquaintance without the cognizance of these natural guides and guardians of your youth. It is at the beginning of connections of this kind that

* Bishop Jeremy Taylor's "Marriage Ring."

parental counsel should be sought. Never commit yourselves by a word till the domestic oracle has been consulted; nor allow your affections to be entangled till a father's and a mother's judgment have been pronounced. Determine that similarity of taste, especially in the most important of all matters—RELIGION—shall lie at the basis of any union you may form.

Should it be that God has not destined you to wedded bliss, forget not "that there are advantages peculiar to single life—that it affords an immunity from many cares, an opportunity for intellectual pursuits, a power to do good extensively, which married women may not enjoy. And if these privileges are improved, if cheerfulness and benevolence characterize the temper, there will be no want of occupation, of happiness, or of sympathy. The kind sister or aunt will be always welcomed; she will be hailed as the agreeable companion, or the tender nurse; as the participator in joy, or the sympathizer in sorrow; as the helper in business, or the companion in affliction; she will be the ready assistant in every good work—the children will run to greet her arrival, the poor will rise up and call her blessed. And if in truth, as we do see in some bright examples in our own day, her energy grows with her desire of doing good, and in the assiduous and pains-taking efforts of Christian charity, she seems to forget the weakness of her sex, she realizes in one of its most pleasing forms primitive devotedness. In pious exercises more spir

itual, in self-denial more mortified, in faith more pure, than any of the cloistered nuns of the strictest habit; while at the same time her religion is without superstition, and her sobriety without gloom. She is one of a holy sisterhood, whose order is truly catholic, whose vows are scriptural, and whose voluntary service is the labor of love."

We now turn over another chapter in the history of Rebekah, in which she appears to far less advantage than she does in the one we have just reviewed, where the artless simplicity of the virgin is lost in the crooked policy of the designing wife and the too partial mother. Perhaps, it will be thought by some, that as I am addressing *young* women, I might have cut short the story with her marriage and her virtues, and drawn a vail over her future failings. But I bear in recollection what I said in a former sermon, that the matron should be held up to the maiden, that from the outset she may learn what to copy and what to avoid. And here is a striking example to serve this purpose, an affecting instance to prove what a transformation a change of circumstances may produce in the same character.

Isaac and Rebekah, like Abraham and Sarah, had their faith tried in waiting long for the son who was to be the heir of promise. Twenty years elapsed and Rebekah bore no child. In answer to the earnest prayers of her husband, God gave her the prospect of becoming a mother. Before this happy event took place she received a communica

tion from the Lord, that she should give birth to twins, who should be the heads of two separate nations, and that, contrary to the order of nature and the custom of nations, the elder brother should serve the younger. Esau and Jacob were born, grew up, and exhibited great difference of taste and character. Into this family of Isaac and Rebekah, there entered that which has rent myriads and myriads of households, setting the husband against the wife, the mother against the father, and one child against another; disturbing the harmony of domestic peace, poisoning the springs of domestic happiness, and preventing the progress of domestic improvement—I mean *parental partiality*. In this case of Isaac and Rebekah, both parents had their favorite child, and what was worse, *manifested* their fondness. It may, in some cases, be almost impossible not to have a preference for one child above another; but what anxious carefulness should there be to conceal it; policy and justice both demand from parents an equal distribution of their affection, their countenance, and their goods; for if there be one folly which more certainly punishes itself than another, it is this ill-judged and wicked distinction between equals. Parental partiality injures both the one preferred and the one that is slighted; inflating the one with pride, insolence, and vanity, and corrupting the other by jealousy, envy, and revenge. Isaac loved Esau, and for a reason not very honorable to his character, "because he did eat of his venison." Rebekah loved Jacob, for

what reason we are not told; it is probable on account both of his superior excellence, and also of the revelation which God had made to her concerning his future history. She was undoubtedly a woman of sincere faith, and even her after-censurable conduct arose from a misdirected piety. She, like another female in after times, pondered in her heart all the things which had been spoken of God concerning this child of promise. It was not long before the effects of parental partiality appeared in this family. A competition for precedence, and the right of primogeniture, engaged the attention of the brothers, and whetted their spirits against each other from their earliest years, which issued in alienation, separation, and hostility, on the part of the children, and sorrow and distress on the part of the parents. Jacob's conduct was ungenerous, and Esau's profane. The former knew his destination to precedence, and instead of leaving God to fulfill his own purpose, sought to accomplish it in a manner unworthy both of himself and of the blessing.

Time, which moves on with ceaseless tread, had brought Isaac to old age; and he now thought of his approaching end, and the propriety of settling his domestic affairs. His great concern was to direct the descent of the patriarchal blessing, which, in this case, implied more than that ordinary benediction which every good man would pronounce on all his children, without distinction; it comprehended the great things contained in the covenant

with Abraham, by which his posterity was to be selected and distinguished as the peculiar people of God, and to give birth to the Messiah. Isaac ought to have remembered the communication made to Rebekah, and by her, doubtless, to himself, that this was to be bestowed upon Jacob. Natural attachment for a while overcame his faith, and he was preparing to divert the blessing from the channel marked out for it by the purpose and providence of God. To enkindle his affection for Esau, by the remembrance of past gratifications, he wished to have some savory meat—certainly a carnal introduction to so divine an act, partaking more of the flesh than of the spirit, and betraying more of that parental partiality under which he had acted, than of the faith of a son of Abraham. Behold, of what importance it is that our early propensities be good, seeing time, indulgence, and habit, interweave them with our very constitution, till they become a second nature, and age confirms instead of eradicating them. We find the two great infirmities of Isaac's character predominant to the last—a disposition to gratify his palate with a particular kind of food, and partiality to his son Esau.

Rebekah, whose affection was ever wakeful, active, and jealous for her favorite, overheard the charge given by her husband to Esau, and instantly set about a scheme to divert the blessing into another, and, as she knew, into its right channel. What should she have done? Expostulated with Isaac on the impropriety of acting in direct oppo-

sition to the revealed purpose of God. Such an appeal, to a mind devout and contemplative, as his evidently was, notwithstanding its weaknesses, would, in all probability, have succeeded. Instead of this, she manifested what has ever been considered to be one of woman's infirmities, a disposition to have recourse to finesse, stratagem, and maneuver, and a wish to carry her object by tortuous and complicated measures, rather than by an open and straightforward course. It is unnecessary for me to enter into the details of her plan, its prompt execution, and its success. It is a sad story. Here was nothing but shameless trickery and imposition —a feigned person—a feigned name—feigned venison—a feigned answer. Every thing was bad, except the motive, and that could not alter the character of the action, and transmute evil into good. It was a disgrace to Rebekah, a cruelty practiced upon Isaac, and a most grievous injury inflicted on the moral character of her son. We must not load Jacob with more of the infamy of this transaction than what really belongs to him. He was not first in the transgression. His feelings revolted from it when it was proposed to him. He remonstrated against it. His remonstrance, however, was founded more upon the *consequences* of the evil than the *evil itself*. And there is a striking difference between his reasoning and that of his son Joseph. Jacob said, "I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing:" but Joseph's pious and noble reply was, "How can I do this great wicked

ness, and sin against God?" The resoluteness of Rebekah is astounding and affecting, confirming the general opinion that woman, in a bad purpose, is often more bold and determined than man. "*Upon me be thy curse, my son; only obey my voice.*" Appalling spectacle! to see a *mother, a religious* mother, so far forgetting what is due to her sex, her relationship, and her piety, as not only to lead, but to goad and drag on, her son, to perpetrate falsehood, and to practice deception, upon his half-blind father. O mothers, read this account and tremble! The plan moves forward, but the whole plot was in danger of exploding. The conference between Isaac and his son Jacob is deeply affecting. The half-awakened suspicion and artless simplicity of the father, invests, by the power of contrast, with deeper shades of infamy and guilt, the shameless, undaunted effrontery of the son. Such is the way of transgressors, one sin prepares for, and leads on to another, till the sinner is involved, by a kind of necessity, to add another and another lie, to help on the former one. Isaac's ears were truer than his eyes, and his faculties were not so blunted by age, as not to be capable of reasoning upon some improbabilities; for there is something about falsehood, which, though it may silence, yet will not ordinarily satisfy. Craft, however, in this case, is too deep for honesty, and Isaac, kind and incredulous to evil thoughts, soon finds his suspicions lulled, eats the venison, and bestows the blessing. It is no part of my lecture to paint, or rather copy, the scene which

followed, when the return of Esau revealed the plot, and proclaimed the deception. The shock to poor old Isaac was almost overwhelming. As an aged and afflicted man, the imposition which had been practiced upon him would excite his indignation. Yet a moment's reflection would convince him of his mistake, in intending to convey to Esau that blessing which God designed for Jacob. Such considerations rushing upon his mind at once, sufficiently account for all his feelings: it was to him like a place where two seas meet, or as the union of subterranean fires and waters, which causeth the earth to tremble. Esau is to be pitied, and would be more so, if his distress arose from any other feelings than disappointed ambition. He who profanely despised the birthright, cared nothing for the loss of the blessing, but as it deprived him of some earthly distinctions and temporal possessions.

Rebekah's policy had succeeded. But she soon began to reap its bitter fruits, in perceiving the feud which she had occasioned between the two brothers. The same tent could no longer contain them. And intelligence having reached her that Esau meditated revenge, even to the murder of his fraudulent brother, she hurried away Jacob to the land of Padan-Aram, to seek a protection and a home among her own relatives. With the sequel of this interesting story you are acquainted, and we return to Rebekah. The best explanation that can be given of her conduct, and which has been put

forth by her apologists as her defense, is that she acted from religious motives. Perhaps this is in part true; but I think not wholly. There is much of the mother mixed up with the believer; and no small share of regard for the interests of a favorite child, blended with regard to the purposes of God. But be it so, that religion *had* the principal hand in this odious deception, then we see how early pious frauds were practiced for the furtherance of the faith; and Rebekah, so far as this part of her conduct is concerned, is presented to us as the patroness of Jesuitism; for even if we concede to her a religious end, we must admit she adopted the most sinful means to obtain it. She was unquestionably right in her belief that God designed the blessing for Jacob, and in this one respect, I mean her faith, she was stronger and more unswerving than her husband. Yet this faith was mixed with some unbelief after all: for what else was it but a partial distrust, that led her to adopt such sinful means to secure the accomplishment of the divine purpose? Does God's truth require man's falsehood to fulfill it? Can not we leave God to find means to perform his own word, without supposing he requires our sins to help him out of a dilemma? The urgency of the temptation was, no doubt, very great. In her view, an hour or two would decide the matter, and the blessing intended for Jacob would be transferred to Esau, and how then would the declaration be fulfilled? That was no part of her concern.

Let us now relinquish the history, and learn the lessons with which it is fraught. The Scripture narratives are intended to exhibit holiness and sin embodied in living characters, the one for our imitation, and the other for our warning. And not unfrequently we find both sin and holiness blended in the same character, requiring a careful analysis and an accurate discrimination. This discrimination is requisite in looking at the character now before us.

As you see Rebekah with her pitcher on her shoulder coming to draw water, you can not fail to notice her *domestic* and *industrious habits*. Yes, it was when thus occupied, and not when indolently reclining upon the couch of ease—nor when sauntering with a company of associates as idle and as gossiping as herself—nor when wasting her time in useless occupations of frivolity and amusement, that Eliezer met her. No; but, though high-born, wealthy, and beautiful, bearing upon her shoulder the pitcher to the well, to draw the evening's supply of water for the family. I admit that the artificial habits of society had not then introduced those distinctions in household occupations which the advance of civilization has now brought into our habitations. At that time, and long since, the women of wealthy families were engaged in services, which are now with propriety consigned to hired servants. There was nothing unseemly then in the daughters of rank being found with their pitcher upon their shoulder at the public well. This, or any thing like it *now*, would be altogether out of char-

acter. I have, however, not only heard of, but have known at least one, who though high-born, yet under the influence of mistaken views of the obligations of religion, performed those menial services which belong to, and are usually discharged by, domestics. Surely this "*voluntary* humility," as the apostle calls it—this unprescribed, factitious lowliness, does neither honor to its subject nor good to Christianity; for when mistresses thus do the work of servants, servants by a natural ambition and exchange will seek to take the place of mistresses. We ask no woman to step out of her place, or to descend from her rank, but only to be industrious in the domestic duties which belong to it. Every young woman should aim to be useful at home, and *that* is not a wise or good mother who does not train her daughters for such occupations But as we have already dwelt on this, it is not necessary to enlarge upon it here, any further than to say, that humble yet useful employments of domestic life, are a virtuous woman's most honorable station; that whether in single life, wedlock, or widowhood, God and nature have destined you, my female friends, to occupation, not perhaps highly honorable in the eyes of unfeeling wealth or giddy dissipation, but highly consequential to the happiness of others, and therefore essential to your own.

We can not fail to notice in Rebekah's early deportment, an *artless, unaffected simplicity*, affectingly in contrast with her subsequent artifice and duplicity. This it *is* which invests her character,

and most of the excellent ones in Scripture, with such irresistible charms. To whatever we look, we find that simplicity is beauty. This is true of *nature* as the great model. Amid all its grandeur and complexity, all is easy and inartificial, as if its most perfect elaboration were *un*elaborated, and flowed without effort from power in repose, though actually in operation; and thus gave the character of its own graceful ease to all its productions. Simplicity is no less beautiful in *art* than in nature, and the very perfection of art is to hide itself in copying the simplicity of nature. All this holds good of *manners*—there, especially, affectation is hateful and repulsive. Studied display of any kind, whether of intellect or virtue, of conversation or even of pronunciation, or of singularity, whether in dress or habits, is always odious. It can not secure respect, but must excite ridicule. Perhaps this is one of the principal follies against which women, and especially *young* women of education, have to guard. An *artificial* character has sometimes a deep, even a *moral* meaning, as signifying a tendency to artifice, equivocation, and resemblances of virtue not really possessed. This, in its fixed and consolidated form, is hypocrisy, the most odious vice on earth. But what I refer to now is artificialness of *manners;* an obvious aim to be precise above all others; a *studied* mannerism for the purpose of display. This generally springs from that vanity which has been considered by many female writers as one of the foibles of their sex. The

prevalence of this really spoils many otherwise useful and amiable characters. It is in woman what ambition is in man; and though it may be a less dangerous, it is a meaner fault; and it is a form of self-love equally jealous and insatiate. Nothing can be more opposite to the spirit of the gospel, and the only security against it is Christian humility. Be clothed, young women, with this; it is your most becoming and beautiful garment; and where will you obtain it but from the wardrobe of Christianity?

Observe the *courteous affability* of this interesting young woman. Here was a stranger, a servant, though evidently of no mean master; and yet how respectful, how gentle, how affable was her address. Josephus, fond of adding, in his paraphrastic manner, to the terseness and simplicity of the Scrip ture narrative, relates that there were other young females with Rebekah, who were asked for water, but refused; and that she reproved them for their churlishness. Courtesy is a becoming grace in both sexes, but most so in the female; while rudeness, which is a *blemish* upon other characters, is a *blot* upon hers. A female churl is a kind of monstrosity, from which we turn away with insufferable disgust. Courtesy is one of the cheapest exercises of virtue, it costs us less even than rudeness; for the latter, except in hearts that are petrified into stone, must put the subject of it to some expense of feeling. Even a rough voice is disagreeable issuing from female lips, much more a rough man

ner connected with a female form. There may be various things which prevent the exercise of courtesy. In some cases, it is to be traced to pride, a vice which befits a demon, but not a woman. In others it is the result of absolute ill-nature, a morose, sour, and ill-conditioned mind, which knows no genial seasons, and experiences no soft emotions. Some are petulant and irascible, and, when putting on a mood of civility, are easily driven from it by the slightest touch of their diseased irritability. Be courteous, then; it is, if not of the solid substance of holiness, at least its polish. It is a Christian grace, for an apostle has said · "Be pitiful; be courteous."

Akin to this was Rebekah's *kindness.* There was not only an external affability of manner, but a real benevolence of disposition. Here was a stranger, tired and faint with a day's journey in a hot country, asking her kind offices to procure a supply of water for himself and his weary beasts. To grant his request for himself, would have cost her no great labor; but it must have been considerable effort to draw water enough for a number of thirsty camels! And this is more apparent when you know the construction of Eastern wells, which are not like ours, but are a kind of sunken cistern, to which you descend by a flight of steps. How many tiresome descents must this young creature have made, before she satisfied the thirst of Eliezer's camels. And there is another little circumstance which marks her kindness; Eliezer

asked only for a "*sip*" of water, for so the original word signifies, and she said: "*Drink*, and thy camels." It was a solitary act, I admit; but it was so promptly, so generously done, as to indicate habits. It is said, with as much beauty as simplicity, "Love is kind;" and, if possible, with still greater beauty, it is described as one of the traits of the virtuous woman—"In her tongue is the law of kindness"—and here, as it does in all cases, the tongue commands the hand. Insensibility in a man is bad enough, but worse in a woman. An unfeeling woman is a contradiction of her sex, for the female heart has ever been found the dwelling-place of kindness, where misery, driven from every other heart, is sure to find an asylum. In what age, or in what country of the world, has woman forfeited her character as the ministering angel of humanity? When and where has the female bosom abjured the claims of misery, and repudiated the virtue of benevolence? Arctic snows have not frozen up the spring of mercy in the female heart, nor tropical suns evaporated it. Tyranny has not crushed it out, nor barbarism extinguished it. Look at Mungo Park, the African traveler, when alone in the midst of Africa, and lying down to die in want and despair, found by the black women of that dark land, carried to their tent, fed, clad, and cherished, amid the wild strains of their impromptu song, with which they cheered the feelings of his heart, and expressed the benevolence of their own. Young women, cherish in your bosoms the purest

philanthropy. Abhor selfishness—you are made for kindness. Oppose not the design of your Creator. Do no violence to your own nature. A stony heart becomes not you. A tearless woman is a revolting scene in our sorrowful world. She may be pure and beautiful as the marble statue, but if, withal, she is as hard and cold, who can admire her?

I can not yet pass from the contemplation of this sweet and amiable young creature, to behold her in her future character, till I have referred again to the vail of *modesty* under which all this affability and kindness was concealed. In listening to her language in witnessing her conduct, will the most fastidious, or prudish, or censorious of her sex, find aught in any thing she said or did to condemn? Did she violate, in the smallest measure, the decorum of her sex? She did not stand to gaze upon the stranger and his camels, nor do any thing to attract his attention, but was intent upon the object for which she came, and was diverted from it only by an opportunity thrown in her way, without being sought for, to do good. She did not anxiously and confidently enter into discourse with the man, but waited till she was addressed, and then modestly answered him, with all the decorum due to her sex. Virgin modesty, I know, is the most attractive of all female graces. What is intelligence without it, but the bolder impudence; or beauty, but the more seductive snare? There is, I know, a reserve that degenerates into repulsive

pride, as, on the other hand, there is a frankness that corrupts into forwardness. Woman is intended neither to avoid man by a bashful timidity, nor to court him by an obtrusive advance. A genuine modesty guards against each extreme. It is that semi-transparent *vail*, which, by revealing half her excellence, makes that more lovely which it reveals, and excites desire to know the rest. It is her *shield* as well as her vail, repelling all the darts which, either by acts, by words, or by looks, any one would dare assail her purity. It is also her *ornament*, investing all her other excellences with additional charms, like the blush of purity upon the cheek of beauty. It is her *power*, by which she subdues the heart that is worth the conquest. Yea, what is not modesty to woman? Let not down your vail, young women. Cast not away your shield. Rifle not yourselves of your brightest ornament. Enfeeble not your power to influence others. Avoid every thing in which the absence of this virtue can show itself. See how the want of it is reproved by the prophet Isaiah iii. 16–19; and the practice of it is enjoined by the apostle Paul: "That women adorn themselves in *modest* apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but which becometh women professing godliness, with good works"—1 Tim. ii. 9, 10. Neither in dress, nor in conversation, nor in action, nor in the toleration in your presence of improper discourse, violate this law. Chastity is the robe

which every woman should wear, and of which modesty is the golden clasp that keeps it upon her, or the fringe that adorns it; and when the clasp is lost, the garment is likely to fall off; and when the fringe is torn away, or carelessly allowed to be trampled upon, the first dilapidation of the robe has commenced, till at length it is cast away as a disfigured garment, not worth being retained.

I do not wish you to mistake a silly and affected bashfulness for modesty. You live not among Asiatic ignorance, tyranny, sensuality, and female degradation, where woman is used mainly to pander to the appetite of her lord, and where by a cruel jealousy she is excluded from intercourse with all but her fellow-slaves and their common tyrant. You are the women of an enlightened age and country, where you are admitted on equal terms to all the enjoyments of social intercourse. Assert in this respect your rights; maintain your standing, and while you throw off all boldness, cast away with it all unworthy bashfulness. In one of our previous sermons we remarked that the over-prudish mind, which can never speak to one of the opposite sex but with a blush, is not always the purest one in reality.

There are, my young friends, one or two momentous lessons for you to learn from Rebekah's conduct in after-life—lessons which you must carry with you through all your future existence on earth The first is *general*—a change of circumstances ofte

produces a considerable change of character and conduct. How unlike the maid of Nahor was the wife in Canaan! And is it an uncommon thing now, for a change far more extensive and more painful than this to be effected by the new condition into which marriage brings the female character? Learn also this *special* lesson—that we should never seek a good end by bad means; or in other words, never do evil that good may come. Abhor the great principle and favorite maxim of Jesuitism, that the end sanctifies the means; and especially in reference to religion, abhor the application and operation of this most detestable principle—a principle which is more or less interwoven with the whole history of Popery. What crimes have been perpetrated by the zealots of Rome in the abused name of religion, for the good of the church! The pages of history which record the progress of that dreadful apostacy are not only *stained* with blood, but *steeped* in it. And even by other professing Christians, holding a purer creed, and animated by a milder spirit, how much has been done, ostensibly for religion, but really for sectarianism, which is contrary to every principle of both the law of love to God, and love to our neighbor. Religion refuses to be served by any principles of action but its own, and disdains to accept whatever is offered it, that is contrary to truth, love, holiness, and honor. And as the stronger our zeal is for an object, the more we are in danger of resorting, in times of difficulty or in

prospect of defeat, to unworthy means; so the more fervent we are to promote any religious cause, the more watchful we should be against being seduced into the use of unholy means to obtain success. The wife of Isaac was right in her object, but wrong in her means to obtain the blessing for Jacob.

But we must take leave of Rebekah. It is somewhat remarkable that the sacred narrative takes no notice of her death. Is it that this act of her history has so disrobed her character of its pristine beauty, that a censure is pronounced upon her by this impressive silence? One might have hoped that she who came upon our notice at first like a bright and lovely vision, would have been seen to depart with as much gracefulness, simplicity, and beauty as she exhibited when we first saw her with such delighted attention. Is this the only instance of painful contrast between the maid and the matron—the only instance that has disappointed the hopes raised by youthful excellences—the only instance in which the full-blown flower has not answered to the bud? Happy would it have been for thousands if it had. Let it, then, be your first solicitude to exhibit in your early life and single state all those general and moral beauties which form the character of virgin excellence. Be holy, industrious, modest, benevolent, and useful; inspire hope in every beholder, and awaken expectation. But, then, be ever anxious, studious, and prayerful, that in the transition from the single to the wedded state; in the

velopment of the girl into the woman, all that was lovely, and artless, and simple in youthful charms, shall, with unbroken and unvarying consistency, ripen into all that is holy, and estimable, and venerable in the wife, the mother, and the matron.

The Ornaments of an Early Female Profession of Religion.

"That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."—TITUS ii. 10.

"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."—1 PETER iii. 3, 4.

THERE is in human nature an instinctive propensity to decoration. To whatever principle the taste may be traced up, whether to innate perception of the beautiful, or to a vain desire to excite admiration, the fact is indubitable. It is seen equally in savage and in civilized nations: and is manifested alike in attention both to their persons and their dwellings, and, indeed, to all their social customs and usages. The string of shells, of fishes' teeth, or bits of bone, round the neck of the Polynesian, and the blaze of diamonds, or of rubies, upon the brow or the breast of our British Queen, indicate the same instinctive propensity. This taste, however in many cases it may be altogether

corrupted in its object, wrong in its principle, or excessive in its degree, is in its own nature an imitation of the workmanship of God, who "by his Spirit has *garnished* the heavens," and covered the earth with beauty. Who can look over one of creation's loveliest scenes, and behold the display of elegance in form, and beauty in color, which in the flowers of the field and garden, in the plumage of the birds, in the meandering of the rivers, and the gentle undulations of the earth's surface, exhibiting wood and copse, hill and dale--and all gilded with the beams of the glorious sun, as they are reflected like the flashings of the diamond, from sparkling brooks and streams—I say, who can witness all this without being convinced that God himself delights in decoration! He has made a world which he has ornamented so profusely, that he has scattered beauties where there are no eyes but his own to behold them:

> "Full many a gem of purest ray serene
> The dark, unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
> Full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen,
> And waste its fragrance on the desert air."

To reject all idea and effort to add the fair to the good, the beautiful to the useful, would be to oppose and not to imitate—to condemn and not to approve—the works of the Great Creator. And, indeed, the people are not known even among *Christians* who *do* so reject all pretensions to what is ornamental. Even they who conscientiously repudiate the pearl, the diamond, and the ruby, the

feather, and the flower—erect their buildings, select their furniture, plant their gardens, choose their garments, according to their ideas of taste, and with some regard to the laws of beauty.

Hence, I think that both the apostles who touch on the subject of personal decoration for Christian women, are to be understood not as condemning *all* ornament, but only regulating whatever appertains to this matter. The propensity to personal decoration is, without all doubt, peculiarly strong in the female heart. That a maid "should forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire," is spoken of by the prophet as a very unlikely thing. There is nothing wrong in the instinct itself. It serves important purposes. Its total absence isfelt as a serious interruption to the pleasure of social intercourse. A sloven is disagreeable; a slattern intolerable. Christianity makes no war with any of man's natural propensities, but only with their abuse. Its object is not to eradicate our instincts, but to prune and train them, and make them bear good fruit. Now, it is well known that some, in what the apostles say on this subject, find an absolute prohibition of all ornaments of dress, and an injunction to wear only the most plain and unadorned apparel. I think Christian women may fall into much more dangerous misinterpretations of Scripture than this; yet I have no doubt it *is* a misinterpretation. The prohibition seems to be comparative rather than absolute, and contains an injunction to be far more attentive to the ornaments of the soul than to those.

of the body. "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," means, "I prefer mercy to sacrifice." At the same time, there can be no doubt that the words of the text took it for granted that women at all times *are*, and that the women of those times *were*, far too much addicted to ornamental dress; that they trenched both upon modesty and economy by their habits; and therefore that in these verses the apostle laid down some very important hints as to the principles on which *Christian* women should regulate their attire. They inculcate modesty in opposition to what is *im*modest: economy in opposition to extravagance. "Excessive costliness," says Archbishop Leighton, on this passage, "argues and feeds the pride of the heart, and defrauds, if not others of their dues, yet the poor of their charity, which in God's sight is a due debt too; and far more comfort shalt thou have on thy death-bed, to remember that at such a time, 'Instead of putting lace on my own back, I helped a naked back to clothing; I abated somewhat of my former superfluities to supply the poor with necessities;' far sweeter will this be than to remember that, 'I could needlessly cast out many pounds to serve my pride, while I grudged a penny to relieve the poor.'" Barnes has given, I think, the true meaning of the apostle: "It is not to be supposed that *all* use of gold or pearls as articles of dress is here forbidden; but the idea is, that the Christian female is not to seek these as the adorning which she desires, or is not to imitate the world in these personal decorations. It may be a difficult question

to settle how *much* ornament is allowable, and when the true line is passed. But though this can not be settled by any exact rules, since much must depend on age, and on the relative rank in life, and the means which one may possess; yet there is one general rule which is applicable to all, and which might regulate all. It is, that the true line is passed when more is thought of this external adorning, than of the ornament of the heart. Any external decoration which occupies the mind more than the virtues of the heart, and which engrosses the time and attention more, we may be certain is wrong. The apparel should be *such* as not to attract attention; such as becomes our situation; such as will not be particularly singular; such as shall leave the impression that the heart is not fixed on it. It is a poor ambition to decorate a dying body with gold and pearls. It should not be forgotten that the body thus adorned will soon need other habiliments, and will occupy a position where gold and pearls would be a mockery. When the *heart* is right; when there is true and supreme love for religion, it is usually not difficult to regulate the subject of dress."

It is somewhat remarkable that Plato, the loftiest of all the Grecian sages, has a passage which strikingly resembles that of the apostle. "Behavior and not gold is the ornament of a woman. To courtesans, these things, jewels and ornaments, are advantageous to their catching more admirers; but for a woman who wishes to enjoy the favor of one man, good behavior is its proper ornament, and not

dresses. And you should have the blush upon your countenance, which is the sign of modesty, instead of paint; and worth and sobriety instead of gold and emeralds." It is impossible not to notice this similarity between the apostle and the philosopher; and equally impossible, one should think, not to mark the superiority over the reason of the one by the inspiration of the other. "The philosopher is of the earth, earthy: the apostle brings the authority of God, and the power of the unseen world distinctly into view. While Plato leads wives to seek exclusively the honor which comes from men, Peter teaches them to seek the honor that comes down from God—the true Judge of excellence, the great Fountain of honor.

Before we pass from this subject of personal decoration, we will just notice the very beautiful reference which the apostle makes to that part of our nature, which it is to be your chief concern to beautify: "Let it be," he says, "the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not *corruptible*, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price." How exquisitely is this put. How impressive the ideas which are conveyed. It is the decoration of the *soul* rather than of the body, about which Christian women should be chiefly solicitous: and about the ornaments that are suitable to its own nature. The soul is indestructible and immortal—so should its ornaments be. What can jewels of silver or jewels of gold do for this? Can the diamond sparkle upon

the intellect? or the ruby blaze upon the heart? or the pearl be set in the conscience? or the gorgeous robe clothe the character? or the feather or the flower wave over the whole renewed and holy nature? No! The appropriate ornaments of the sou. are truth, and holiness, knowledge, faith, hope, love, joy, humility, and all the other gifts and graces of the spirit—wisdom, prudence, fortitude, and gentleness—these are the jewels with which the inner man should be adorned. The outer man is corruptible. Dust it is, and unto dust it shall return. That beautiful woman, glittering in all the profusion of diamonds, the admiration and envy of the court or the ball-room, must, ere long, be a mass of putrefaction too ghastly to be looked upon—a hideous skeleton—a collection of bones—a heap of dust: and where then will be the immortal spirit? and will it wear the cast-off jewels of the body? O no! these remain rescued from the grasp of the king of terrors, only to ornament other bodies, but not to prepare their souls for immortal glory. But turn now to that other female—the woman who, regardless of the decoration of the body, was all intent upon the beauty of the soul—look at her, I say, who was clothed with the robe of righteousness and the garment of salvation, and decorated with the ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit. She, too, dies, and whatever of beauty there was in her person dies for a season with her: but the indestructible and immortal spirit over which death hath no dominion, goes not unadorned into the presence of

the Eternal, for the jewels with which it decorated itself on earth are as indestructible as its own nature, and go with it to shine in the presence of God.

"Men," says the good archbishop already quoted, "think it poor and mean to be meek. Nothing is more exposed to contempt than the spirit of meekness; it is mere folly with men; but that is no matter; this overweighs all disesteem—it is with God of great price. And these are, indeed, as *He* values them, and no otherwise. Though it be not the country's fashion, yet it is the fashion at court; yea, it is the King's own fashion; 'Learn of *me*,' says he, 'for I am meek and lowly in heart.' Some that are court-bred will send for the prevailing fashions there, though they live not at court; and though the peasants think them strange dresses, yet they regard not that, but use them as finest and best. So care you not what the world says: you are not to stay long with them. Desire to have both your stuffs and your fashion from heaven. The robe of humility, the garment of meekness, will be sent you. Wear them for his sake who sends them to you. *He* will be pleased to see you in them, and is not this enough? It is never right in any thing with us till we attain to this—to tread on the opinion of men, and eye nothing but God's approbation."*

But we now pass from the ornaments of the

* See Dr. John Brown's masterly exposition of this passage of Peter.

Christian woman's person to those of her profession, and which, indeed, is the chief subject of this sermon.

There is something impressive in the exhortation contained in another of the passages placed at the head of this sermon: "*Adorn the doctrine* of God our Saviour." Even the great truth of our Divine Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, is thus represented as susceptible of decoration on the part of those who profess it. The sentiment conveyed is this—the holy life of a consistent Christian is an adornment of the profession of this sublime doctrine. This, more than all splendor of tasteful architecture, or gorgeous forms, or imposing ceremonies, or any thing else which can appeal to the senses, is the decoration of Christian doctrine. It is this, as it shines forth in the beauties of holiness, that decorates true piety,

> "Beyond the pomp that charms the eyes,
> Or rites adorned with gold."

A very large proportion of the members of all Christian churches are females, and *young* females too. This, on many accounts, is a very delightful fact. It has, however, been sometimes complained of, that like others, they are not so anxious to sustain their profession well, as to make it. And it is for their sakes, and to lead them to consider what would set off their profession to the best advantage, that this sermon is designed. The subject of it then is this: as what is ornamental is intended to attract attention, to excite admiration, and to furnish recommendation, it may be inquired, what is

that conduct which will secure all this to the profession of religion? We shall distribute what we have to advance on this subject into the four following particulars:

First. There is a class of things that are *spiritual*, which will have the effect here desired.

And as incongruity of conduct, in reference to *any* profession whatever, is a blemish and not a beauty, a deformity and not a decoration, remember, that *inconsistency* would be so in you in reference to religion. Study your profession, and thoroughly understand what it implies and enjoins. Consider well what sanctity of conduct—what spirituality of mind—what separation from the world in spirit and taste—what devotional feelings—what faith, hope, love, and humility—what amiableness of disposition and amenity of temper are included in the declaration—and that declaration you have actually made—I AM A CHRISTIAN. You should not have made such a profession if you did not understand it, nor mean to sustain it. I must remind you, it is a solemn thing to *profess* to be a disciple of Christ. It supposes you to be a new creature, that old things are passed away and that all things are become new, that you have new principles, new motives, new ends of life, new tastes, and new pleasures. Now, your profession is to be maintained with a due regard to all this. Your conduct must comport with it. You must be dissimilar in these things, *quite* so, to those who make no profession. *They* must *see* the difference as

well as *hear* of it. You must commend yourselves to them as consistent *with* yourselves. You must compel them to say, "Well, we do not like her religion, but it is quite in harmony with her profession." But what is this consistency? The following things will perhaps explain it.

Earnestness, without enthusiasm, fanaticism, or bigotry. Lukewarmness in any thing is odious. Earnestness, on the other hand, excites attention, and sometimes admiration, even where the object is far from commendable; how much more where the object is holy, benevolent, and useful. It is a noble and a lofty spectacle to see, amid a race of frivolous mortals, a soul that is immortal, intent upon its own immortality, and a mind that is surrounded by the frivolities of this visible world, intent upon the realities of the unseen state. Nothing can be more dull and repulsive than a lukewarm and heartless profession of religion—a pale, sickly, and shriveled form, which has all the decay of consumption, without its hectic flush or lustrous eye. On the other hand, how impressive a spectacle is it to behold a young woman, amid the wonderment of some of her companions and the laughter of others, rising upon the wing of faith and habitual devotion above the region of their levities into that of devotion—and to see her eye, as it is upturned to heaven, sparkling with the beam of eternity that has fallen upon it; to follow her in her ardent career, pursuing her seraphic course, undeterred by contrary examples or opposing influence. Yet there must be

no enthusiasm leading her to violate the law of sobriety—no fanaticism leading her to tie down others to all the laws she has imposed upon herself, and to cherish a hostile, much less a malignant feeling toward them, because they seem to differ from her in some things which she deems important. There must be the most profound humility blended with all this intense earnestness, and the mildest forbearance toward others, combined with its own conscientiousness as regards its laws for its own conduct.

Earnestness implies a resolute determination never to allow others to interfere with its convictions and pursuits; a courage that dares to be singular—a fortitude to brave opposition, united with a firm gentleness under opposition and persecution. It includes seriousness without gloom; for she who is bent upon eternity, and anxious for salvation, can not sink down into the levity of those who are all taken up with fashion, amusement, and folly. On the other hand, it includes such an intelligent joy as makes its possessor satisfied with her own sources of enjoyment, without ever running to the amusement of the world for pleasure and excitement. The young female professor must let it be seen and felt that her religion is her bliss and not her penance—that it is her song and her solace She must appear as irradiated with sunbeams, and not invested with shades. Her countenance must be the index of a heart at peace—a bosom serene and happy. Earnestness must be indicated, also, by an intelligent and well-regulated zeal to bring

others under that influence which is the spring of its own energies. Mild in persuasion, gentle in entreaty, and with a loving, insinuating manner, the female religious professor must aim at the conversion of others. *Usefulness*, in the way of holy activity, for the temporal and eternal happiness of mankind, must be a conspicuous trait of her character. Selfishness, indolence, and inertness are a disfigurement of character, while benevolent activity is one of its richest ornaments.

And, in addition to all this, earnestness means a most anxious desire to cultivate that prime virtue in the composition of womanly and Christian excellence —MEEKNESS. See how this is commended in the passage we have already quoted from the writings of the apostle Peter: "The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price." God values it above all gifts of intellect, delights in it above the most splendid genius, honors it above all that *men* delight to honor. It is woman's ornament above all others; it is her defense, for who *can* oppress the gentleness that never provokes, and can scarcely resist or complain. Who can wantonly tread on that lowly, lovely floweret, which, as it lifts its unpretending head, silently says: "Can you crush one that hurts none?" Nothing is more unsightly than the reverse of this—an irritable, discontented, peevish, domineering woman. Hence the declaration of the inspired Israelitish sage, "It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop alone, than in a wide house with a

brawling woman. It is better to dwell in the wil derness, than with a contentious and angry woman. Whoso hideth her hideth the wind." Mr. Jay has drawn a beautiful picture of this virtue in his character of a Christian wife; as one "Who can feel neglects and unkindnesses, and yet retain her composure; who can calmly remonstrate and meekly reprove; who can yield and accommodate; who is not 'easily provoked,' and is 'easily entreated;' who would endure rather than complain, and would rather suffer in secret, than disturb others with her grief." Such is meekness, the highest form of the peculiarly *Christian* life, and such the ornament of female Christian profession.

But, *secondly*, I now touch upon another branch of the subject, and that is, the importance of *social* excellence to the adornment of religion.

Great injustice has been done to religion, and a great hindrance thrown in the way of its diffusion, by those descriptions of it which represent it as an abstract thing, almost exclusively appertaining to the Sabbath as to *time:* and to the church as to *place:* a mere matter of devotion—a transaction between God and the soul about salvation and heaven; but which has nothing or little to do with secular affairs, the social relations, and the places of resort in human life. In short, a thing which looks entirely heavenward, but which casts no glance upon earth. This, however, is superstition, and we find enough of it in Popery; which over lays with a cumbrous ceremonial the moral duties

of the law, as well as the free grace of the gospel cuts, in many instances, the ties of social life, and isolates men and women from their fellows; and by the devotions of the cloister, the convent, and the church, supersedes the duties of the house, the shop, and the exchange; thus setting forth religion as fitting men, as is supposed, for the next world, but having very little to do with their abode in the present one. On the contrary, true religion—the religion of the Bible—has two aspects: with one, it looks up to heaven; with the other, down to earth. It gathers all the interests of man under its protection and fostering care. Like the sun which, though fixed in the heavens, pours the flood of his light and glory and cherishing influence upon earth; or like the atmosphere which, though above the earth, enters into every place upon it, and sustains the insects that creep, as well as the birds that soar; so religion irradiates with its light, and guides by its revelations, and animates with its stimulus, and sanctifies by its power, and blesses with its influence, all persons, in all their relations, and all their interests in this present world, who yield themselves up to its authority and government. It goes to the palace, and teaches kings their duty; to the legislature, and teaches senators theirs; to the exchange, and teaches merchants theirs; and to the family, and instructs all its members in the various duties they owe to each other, as well as to God. Religion is a household thing, a family law; it lifts the latch of the house, and goes in and takes its

seat at the family table, and joins the circle round the hearth, as well as round the altar; it swells the joys of the domestic fellowship, as well as responds to the evening prayer, or chants the morning hymn; it founds the duties of the second table of the law upon those of the first, employs the loftiest theology to enforce the commonest morality, and enjoins the most ordinary obligations of social existence by motives drawn from the cross of Christ.

Hence, then, the necessity of paying great attention to the various duties of social and domestic life. We are commanded to let our "light shine before men, that they *seeing* our good works may glorify God." So in the beautiful passage quoted from the apostle Peter, where he gives directions to Christian wives; he says, "Be in subjection to your own husbands, that if they obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they *behold* your chaste conversation coupled with fear." Here again is the fact set out, that religion is intended to regulate the intercourse, and form the character of domestic and social life, and that where its influence, so exerted, is seen, it must be beneficial to the observers of it. We wish to press this most earnestly upon your attention, that the faith of the gospel is intended and calculated to carry social excellence to the very highest perfection. It is the soil in which all the seeds of domestic happiness will best flourish. Hence, then, no profession of religion can be ornamented, unless there be a high degree of this.

It should not be forgotten that this very often flourishes, even apart from religion. Most exemplary instances of the home duties of life are not seldom found in those who make no profession of religion. Good husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, are found on the outside of the circle of vital piety; a fact which ought to make those who are within it still more anxious to be exemplary in the discharge of their obligations. A real Christian should excel the unconverted person, not only in religion, but in morality. She should not only be more holy, but more socially excellent. She should excel the worldly in those things which the latter makes her boast, and rise above the level which she has prescribed as *her* highest elevation in moral and social virtue. Select, therefore, the most dutiful and affectionate daughter, the most kind and attentive sister you can, of this class, and say to yourself, "She makes no profession of religion, and yet she excels in a manner worthy of attention and admiration, in all the duties of domestic life. Now, as I *do* profess religion, I must, if possible, be still more exemplary than she is in all social obligations, for surely nothing could possibly bring religion into greater disrepute than for my parents, or my brothers and sisters, or even the servants, to make a comparison to my disadvantage, between my conduct and hers." You probably have heard of the historic fact of that Roman daughter, who, when an aged father was in his condemned cell and left to starve, all having been pro-

hibited from carrying him food, nourished him from that same breast which sustained her infant. The authorities were so struck with the report, that the old man was reprieved, the daughter raised to public esteem, and the prison demolished to make way for a temple dedicated to FILIAL VIRTUE. If paganism furnished such an example of devoted affection, and if pagans could so admire it, what ought Christianity to do; not, of course, in the same mode of action, but in every other in which genuine and strong affection can show itself. If *you* would adorn *your* profession, it must be in this way of domestic excellence. There may be the most seraphic piety, so far as the raptures of devotion go—there may be a most punctilious performance of all the rites and ceremonies of religion—there may be a most eager and regular attendance upon all the public services of religion—there may be a flaming zeal for the spread of the religious peculiarities of your denomination; but if at the same time there be a deficiency of duty, honor, and obedience to your parents, or of kind interest and affection for your brothers and sisters, or of humane considerateness for the servants; all this religious profession will only excite disgust, and raise a suspicion of your sincerity, and a prejudice against religion itself. No one can possibly be attracted to or conciliated by a religion which is in any great degree destitute of social and domestic excellence. It is a terrible taunt to be thrown at any one, "Yes, she is, if her own profession and supposition be consulted, a

very good Christian; but it is a pity she is not a better daughter, a more kind sister, and a more accommodating neighbor." The most flaming profession must be at once thrown into eclipse by such a sarcasm. If you were to study how most effectually to discredit not only your profession of it, but religion itself, you could not be more successful than by associating with it such a line of conduct as this. I do therefore most solemnly and anxiously entreat you to enter very deeply into the subject of the sermon entitled, "THE YOUNG WOMAN AT HOME."

It is probable that this sermon will be read by some who sustain the character of female servants. This is a class of persons to be found in all our churches, and in some are very numerous; and I take this opportunity of saying that I have many such who are among the brightest ornaments of the church under my care, and who, by their exemplary deportment, do much to recommend religion to their employers. Their honesty, diligence, industry, good temper, and obliging, respectful deportment, make them the comforts of the households in which they live. It is somewhat observable, that the text which speaks of our "adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour," was addressed to servants. And so far as the ornamental parts of religion are concerned, as well as its substantial elements, none have more occasions, or more favorable circumstances for exhibiting them than female servants. Their humble situation, by testing their good tem-

per, devotedness, and submission, gives them an opportunity of bringing out into bold and beautiful relief all the morally decorative parts of Christian piety. On the other hand, there are some who, by a lamentable deficiency of these more amiable qualities, though, perhaps, they may have real religious principle, have excited much prejudice against genuine piety, and led their employers to say, "I am not anxious again to have what are called *religious* servants, for in most things they are no better, and in some they are worse than others."

Thirdly. There are *intellectual* ornaments of your profession, which you should seek both on their own account and on that of religion. True it is that genuine and consistent religion is its own recommendation, and depends upon nothing extraneous for its real value. Still, as there are those who have imbibed prejudices against it, and have taken up mistaken views of its nature, as if it were at war with the gifts of the intellect and the graces of the character, it would be well to disabuse their minds, and by your attainments, accomplishments, and your elegance, to convince them that piety is not, as they may suppose, another name for ignorance, stupidity, and vulgarity. For their sakes, then, as well as for your own pleasure, cultivate your minds by study. Acquire an eager thirst for knowledge. Be fond of reading, and of the *best kind* of reading. Disprove the slander that girls usually are only fond of tales and novels, of love-stories, and female adventures or heroism. Love knowledge, desire

to arrive at truth, be anxious to investigate the mysteries of nature; and covet to enrich your minds with the treasure dug up and distributed in such abundance in this wonderful age. Store your minds with this wealth. But let other faculties be brought into exercise besides your memory; cultivate your judgment; be inquisitive, reflective, discriminating. There are many young persons whose memory is a store-house crowded with facts, names, and dates, but who are lamentably deficient after all in judgment. They may talk French, quote history, and display other accomplishments, but their intellect is too feeble to form, to hold, or to defend an opinion of their own. We do not, of course, expect all women to be profound logicians, or subtle metaphysicians, but most tolerably well-educated females may, by vigorous and well-sustained efforts, arrive at some maturity of sound judgment. Let it then be seen that the highest of all wisdom and knowledge does not lead you to despise the lower kinds; lest those who are adepts only in the lower kinds, may, by what they see in you, despise that which is the highest. Make it clear that they who are the children of God are most solicitous to become acquainted with *all* the works of their Heavenly Father, not excepting the wonders and glories of creation. Convince the worshipers of the God of nature, or rather of the God, Nature—that while you are chiefly anxious to pass on and worship Him who sits enthroned between the cherubim, upon the mercy-seat in the

Holy of Holies, you can bow and adore with them in the vestibule of his temple—ascend with them to the highest altitude of earthly subjects and general knowledge, and when, like birds of weaker pinions and dimmer vision, they droop the wing and stop their flight, do you, like the eagle soaring still upward to the sun, pursue your heaven-bound course, and rise into the regions of celestial splendor.

Nearly allied to this is *taste*, or a perception and love of the beautiful and sublime in nature, in literature, in accomplishments, in conduct, yes, and in Holy Scripture. The Bible is full of instances of this. With a correct *literary* taste, you will relish more even this bread of life, that came down from heaven—the Word of God. Inspiration has garnished its page with beauties that are hidden from eyes whose vision has not been strengthened by education. The Scripture is a paradise of flowers to be admired, as well as of fruits that are to be eaten.

Taste, displayed even in what are called *accomplishments*, is ornamental to piety, when not carried to excess. As in a former sermon I observed, even these elegant trifles are not to be despised. True, it is a sin for a Christian woman to spend hours and hours of each precious day in the fashionable modes of killing time, by embroidery, crotchet, painting, languages, and music, to the neglect of religion, useful reading, and all benevolent effort. It is truly affecting to see a rational, immortal, and accountable creature, dwelling in this world of igno-

rance, sin, and misery, which she could do something to enlighten, reform, and bless, and she on her way to eternity and the bar of God, consuming so much of the best and preparatory period for her whole existence in this world and the next, in working figures upon canvas, or drawing them upon paper, or in playing and singing, or in acquiring German, French, or Italian. Let me not, however, be misunderstood. I am not such a rigid utilitarian as to be the advocate of the merely excellent in human character, for I really love and admire the ornamental. I am not all for Doric strength, but contend also for Ionic grace and Corinthian elegance. I am not for young women laying down the needle and the pencil, nor for their leaving the piano silent and untouched, nor the grammars of foreign languages unlearned. No such thing! Religion forbids not these matters. Nature, and the Bible, too, are full of the sweetest embroidery and enameling, full of music and painting, and all the varieties of a language not our own. Instead of forbidding what can add embellishment to the female character, I enjoin it. Woman, formed to please, yea, made in Paradise, where beauty was in perfection, and where thy first lessons on taste were taught by the Great Master of all created beauty—go on to besprinkle thy character, and interweave thy conduct with every flower of elegance; and especially, Christian woman, let it be seen by thy sex, that thou hast not so learned Christ as to throw off that delight in the picturesque, the tasteful, and the dec-

orative, with which, when HE pointed to the lily the vine, the birds, and the flocks, he was pleased to enliven and adorn his own discourses. To me it is always a beautiful sight to behold the robe of righteousness, and the garment of salvation, in which genuine piety is ever attired, adorned, though not encumbered, with the jewels of elegant accomplishments and tasteful decoration. Now, all this is important to you as young, unmarried women; and how is the importance of it augmented by looking forward and contemplating yourselves in future life, as wives and mothers. Without intelligence and taste, are you fitted to be the companion of a wise and sensible man, or to preside with advantage over the education of children? Remember the character of the age in which you live. But even in these days of knowledge and taste, we know very well that the aptness and ability of a good housewife are always invaluable; for it is a poor commendation to say of a woman, "She is exceedingly well informed in all the literature of the day, quite learned, but she knows very little of household affairs." I believe her husband often *thinks*, if he does not say, "I would dispense with a great deal of her bookishness and her knowledge, if I could have the house kept in better condition, and enjoy a little more *comfort* at home." Still, a a wife and a mother, to all the household pre-requisites, *should* and *may* add intelligence and taste. It is, indeed, the perfection of womanly character, at once to "look well to the ways of her house

hold," and also, to "open her mouth with wisdom." How impressive and attractive a scene is it to see a pious, well-informed, accomplished woman, respected as well as beloved by her husband, as his intelligent companion, esteemed by his guests, and looked up to with confidence, reverence, and affection by her children, over whose general education she presides with dignity and ability.

Fourthly. There are some things which are not reducible to either of the other heads, and which may, therefore, be called *general* excellences of a decorative nature. These have been already dwelt upon in former discourses, and therefore need only be briefly mentioned here. We find them set forth in the early character and conduct of Rebekah, in which we beheld modesty without silliness, frankness without forwardness, courtesy without affectation, and complaisance without servility. In short, all that maidenly reserve which would restrain whatever is obtrusive, rude, impudent, and bold, and which yet would allow of an artless, ingenuous, and unembarrassed mode of intercourse with the other sex. We have sometimes seen *good* women so bold, so obtrusive, so imposing, as to repel and disgust. We could not doubt that there was really some religious principle at the bottom of all this, but it was so overlaid with this somewhat indecorous surface that it could scarcely be seen. In some cases it has happened that even the very profession of religion, which should have led them to draw closer the vail of modest reserve, has led them to

throw it off altogether, and they seemed to act as if the Christian name, which ought to be a guarantee for all that is meek and gentle, is a sanction for unseemly forwardness. On the contrary, there are others, whose profession of religion has so anointed them with the odors of assumed sanctity, so stiffened them into prudish reserve, and so distorted the simplicity of nature with the formalism of a gloomy superstition, that they are repulsive as specters, and lead many to exclaim, "If this be religion, it may be pure, but it is surely unlovely, and one should imagine as unfit for heaven, where all is joyous, as it is for earth, where, if happiness be wanting, *this* certainly can not supply it."

Good temper, or amiability, is essential to the adornment of a Christian profession. This has been alluded to already in more places than one, but its importance justifies its repetition. I have already admitted that there is a great difference, in this respect, in natural constitution. Hence it costs some immensely more pains to acquire a small degree of this excellence, than it does in others to manifest ten times the amount. And really there may be more of principle and virtue in the modicum of the one than in the abundance of the other. Some indulgence should, therefore, be shown to those who are born with a crabbed disposition, and they should not always be judged with too harsh a severity. We see the fault, but not the contrition with which it is followed; nor do we witness the deep self-abasement which the ebullition of the mo-

ment inflicts for hours, if not days. But still we would enjoin on those who are conscious of this infirmity, a most anxious, earnest, and prayerful attention to the subject. Let every woman who is troubled with an overwrought sensibility, a morbid susceptibility of offense, an inflammable liability to passion, put her heart under discipline, or this, her constitutional tendency, will be a prolific source of misery to herself, and to others around her. It is not, however, as a source of disquietude, that I now allude to it, but as a cause of scandal. A bad temper not only troubles the heart, but it disfigures the profession. Observers can see nothing to attract, to love, to admire, in that religion which is associated with so much ill-temper. There are some persons whose bad temper is unassociated with piety, or, indeed, moral worth of any kind—and they are wasps, hornets, scorpions—all venom, and no honey—according to the degree of malignity they possess. There are others, who have real godliness, and some sterling excellence of other kinds, and they resemble the bees, who, though they have honey, yet are somewhat irritable, and have also a sting for those who offend them. Cultivate, then, a lovely and amiable temper, as one of the brightest ornaments of religion. It is to religion what the burnish is to the gold, the polish to the steel, the fragrance to the rose, the sunshine to the prospect.

There is one thing which, in addition to all that has been mentioned, is requisite to give the finishing

stroke of ornament to the character of the young female professor of religion, and that is—the virtue that is sometimes designated *good sense*—at other times, *prudence*—at others, *thoughtfulness*. I know such dispositions are thought, by some minds, to partake too much of the grave to be ornamental in youth. They *may* hang like rich, ripe clusters round the character of the matron, but such persons think the beauty of youth consists of the picturesque —the romantic—with a tinge of the wild, the visionary, and the enthusiastic. There is no poetry, they imagine, in prudence—no imagination in good sense—no fancy in thoughtfulness. True, and I will concede so much as to allow, that a precocious gravity, an anticipation of the antiquated sobriety of threescore years and ten, is not what I enjoin, or wish to see, in maidenly youth. Even religion, with all its solemn proprieties, all its heavenly sanctities, does not extinguish the vivacity, the sprightliness, and buoyancy of a girl in her teens. I love to see her sparkling eye, her sun-lit countenance, her elastic step, and to hear the merry note of her laughter, and the music of her cheerful voice. *This* is ornamental; it belongs to her age, and the natural flow of her spirits, and it is only superstition that would turn that young and joyous creature into the stiff and silent statue, the nun-like figure, or the unsmiling devotee. But, then, is it any detriment to all this innocent hilarity to have a meditative thoughtfulness, an instinctive sense of propriety, a cautious reserve, an accurate discrim

ination? Is it a blemish rather than a beauty, to be able to consider what, in all circumstances, is best to be done, and to be able to do it well—to act from principle rather than from impulse, and to be guided by reason rather than by feeling—to weigh words before they are spoken, and estimate actions before they are performed? Is not propriety beauty? Are freaks and caprices, whims and eccentricities, imprudences and follies, ornaments? Yes, in the estimation of that *silly* girl, and in hers alone, who would rather be smiled at for her wildness and her weakness, than commended for her more solid excellence. What kind of a *mother* is this romantic and wayward creature likely to make? Let the *Christian* young woman be very jealous, then, of this romanticism, and consider it is not in keeping with the dignity and sanctity of religion. The matrons are admonished by the apostle to teach the young women to be *sober*—a word that relates not, there, to wine, but to a prudent thoughtfulness.

Such, then, are the ornaments of early female religious profession. It has been all along through this discourse supposed that there may be much of real piety, without some of these accompaniments—a rough, unpolished godliness, a measure of real, but unadorned religion. One young female may be very sincere in her profession, and yet have an unmortified infirmity of temper; another may be very illiterate or weak-minded; another may be guilty of various little inconsistencies, which tarnish the beauty of her profession; another may be rash,

restless, and imprudent; another may be spiritually proud, and something like affectedly sanctimonious; another may be wanting in agreeable and accommodating home excellences. In all these ways, and in various others, religion may be disparaged, shorn of its beauty, rendered less attractive, and made even repulsive to those who observe it. "Let not your good," said the apostle, "be evil spoken of." Religion is itself so transcendently excellent, being the highest glory of man, the image of God, and the temper of Heaven, that it should be exhibited to the greatest possible advantage. Who that wore the portrait of some dear friend, or suspended a picture of the queen in their house, would not wish to have a frame or a setting worthy of the subject? Who would not deprecate the idea of presenting either of these all covered with dust and defilement? Religion is the only thing that can make people happy in this world, or guide them to eternal felicity in the world to come. How solemnly, tremblingly anxious should be all who profess it, to exhibit it in the most advantageous light, and with the greatest and most powerful attractions. How deeply solicitous should we be, lest by any thing others see in us, they should take a prejudice against true godliness, and we should thus cast stumbling-blocks in their way. How anxious should we feel, and how studious should we be, to invest our profession with the whatsoever things are lovely, that others, beholding our good works, our peace of mind, our meekness,

gentleness, and kindness, our usefulness and humility, should be won to Christ; that so, if they will not love religion, in the first instance, for its own sake, they may be conciliated to it by the ornaments with which, in our case, it is decorated.

Before this sermon is concluded, I may, with great propriety, suppose that some will read it who have made no profession of religion, who are in visible connection with no Christian church, and are living in the habitual neglect of the Lord's Supper. Making no profession of religion! How is this? Have you none to profess? Melancholy idea! No religion! Better, I admit, not to profess at all, than to profess what you do not possess, and thus add hypocrisy to other sins. But is it not painful and fearful to think of a rational, immortal, sinful being living without penitence, prayer, faith, and love? How can you live another hour without it, in such a state? What are all the intellectual ornaments spoken of above, without personal piety, but a garland of beautiful flowers around the brow of a corpse; or but as diamonds sparkling on the breast of death? Oh, for your soul's sake, live no longer without remem bering your Creator in the days of your youth.

Others, perhaps, will read this discourse, who, though partakers of true faith in Christ, and love to God, are not yet professors of the religion they possess. We again say, how is this? Have you pondered that language of the apostle: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with

the mouth confession is made unto salvation"—Rom. x. 10. And that solemn injunction of Christ, when he instituted the sacred supper: "Do this in remembrance of me." Is this the command you except from the law of the New Testament as the only one you feel at liberty to disobey? *This* one—so tender, so pathetic, so loving! *This*—delivered in sight of the cross, and only a few hours before our Lord endured those agonies by which you are saved! What! neglect the command of *dying* love! A command so positive, an invitation so gracious, an injunction, obedience to which is at once so honorable, so happy, and so useful. What is your reason for this neglect? Do you tremble to make a profession because it is so awful? Does not this arise from *superstitious* rather than *religious* dread? Awful! to profess the faith you exercise, and to commemorate the death of Christ? Have you not mistaken the design of the Lord's Supper as simply a commemorative ordinance, and are you not contemplating it as envoloped with the mystery in which sacerdotal assumption has wrapped it up? But, "you tremble to make a profession, lest you should dishonor it, as so many have done." They have, indeed, and the painful fact should lead to caution, self-examination, and earnest prayer for grace, that another stumbling-block should not be furnished by you. But the very fear, will, if sincere, be your preservation from the object of your dread. The path of duty is the way of safety. Besides, are you less likely to sin *without* the pale

of communion, than *within* it? We invite you, therefore, if you are partakers of true faith, to profess, or to use a Scriptural synonym, to *con*fess it. The communion of saints, and the participation of the Lord's Supper will strengthen by God's grace the principle, and call forth the exercise of the Divine life, and be at once your honor and your joy.

And, as to you who are already to be found in the fellowship of the faithful, we congratulate you on the choice you have made, and on the decision to which you have come. To your pastors it is a source of unspeakable pleasure to receive you among the number of the followers of the Lamb. You, in an especial manner, are our hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing, inasmuch as we look to you, and those who may descend from you, to fill up the places of the more aged disciples, when they, according to the course of nature, shall be removed to the church triumphant. Acknowledge practically and gratefully the grace you have received from the Lord, by using your influence with labor and judgment, to engage other young persons, your relatives, and companions, to come and share with you the privileges, and enjoy the blessings of Christian communion. And to give effect to your persuasions, exhibit all the beauty of consistent example. Let religion be seen in you, combining with all its sanctities and spiritualities, that amenity of life that amiability of temper, general intelligence, correct taste, and social excellence, which shall prepossess them in favor of genuine piety. Make it

evident to them, that true godliness is as happy a thing as it is a holy one. Convince them by what they see in you, as well as by what they hear from you, that you have found the secret of bliss—that your soul has touched the center. Let the richest excellences, all that can adorn the female character, all the most rare and delicate beauties that are admired, be strung together upon the golden thread of eminent piety, and be hung like a necklace of heavenly pearls round your profession. Thus "ADORN THE DOCTRINE OF GOD YOUR SAVIOUR IN ALL THINGS."

The History and Character of Martha and Mary of Bethany.

"Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her"—LUKE x. 38-42

THIS beautiful little gem of sacred history is replete with instruction in reference to every one of the individuals which it brings before us. It is a group of characters, each possessing its own peculiar excellence and interest. How much does it say for the condescension, kindness, and fidelity of the chief personage of the scene; and not less for the feelings and the excellences of the other two. In the person and conduct of Jesus Christ are always combined, without being confounded, all the uncreated glories of the godhead, and all the

milder beauties of the perfect man; and if, in the admiration of his humanity, we are not to lose sight of his divinity, so neither in the contemplation of his divinity are we to forget his humanity. Human nature had its consummation in him—he is its representative in its best estate—the *pattern man*. His greatness did not raise him above any branch or manifestation of goodness. Is friendship one of the virtues of our nature—one of the bonds of society—one of the blessings of life—a sweet and lovely flower that unfolds its beauty and exhales its fragrance in the garden of our social existence? Behold in Jesus Christ this virtue in perfection! He had his attachments, not indeed capricious ones; they were all founded on adequate reasons for their selection and exercise; but he *had* them. His nature was susceptible of *special* regards. He felt more complacency in some persons than he did in others, whom still he loved. He does so now. Hence the groundlessness of the cavil against Christianity that it nowhere positively *enjoins* the practice of friendship; for it does more—it *exhibits* it in the character and conduct of its Divine Founder. For "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus;" and this was so well known, that when Lazarus was ill, "his sisters sent unto Christ, saying, Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick." And where shall we find a more beautiful manifestation of friendship than is described in the gospel narrative of Christ's conduct when Lazarus was dead?

In entering upon this interesting history, I may observe, that it is one of the peculiarities of our Saviour's discourses that he often takes occasion to graft general truths on special incidents—makes comparatively small occurrences the vehicle of momentous instructions, and in a few words says all that is necessary to bring everlasting truth, in some important view of it, home to all times and circumstances. Standing on the spiritual central-point, he, without violence, entwined the minutest and least important circumstances of the present with the loftiest eternal verities. Thus in the conduct of the two sisters before us, he places together the nothingness of all love and care for the body, in comparison with care for the soul and solicitude about that which is everlasting.

Bethany was a little village about two miles from Jerusalem, inhabited as a suburban retreat by many wealthy and respectable Jews. There dwelt Martha, who appears to have been the elder sister, and mistress of the house, her sister Mary, and a brother, named Lazarus. Whether the sisters were maidens or widows, we are not informed. All we we know of the family is—and it is the best and most worthy thing to *be* known of them—that they were all united, not only by the ties of nature, but of grace—they were all one in Christ, partakers of "the common salvation," by a "like precious faith."

In the bosom of this little quiet and holy family it is probable Jesus occasionally found repose after

the bodily fatigues and mental sufferings of the unbelieving city; for his humanity was susceptible of both these, indeed, of all the sinless infirmities of our nature, and even of the relief afforded by rest and pious converse. "O happy house," says the pious Bishop Hall, "into which the Son of God vouchsafed to set his foot! O blessed women, that had grace to be the hostesses to the Lord of heaven and earth! How should I envy your felicity herein, if I did not see the same favor, though in a different way, if I be not wanting to myself, lying open to me." There are two ways of receiving Christ—in himself, by opening the door of our hearts by faith; and in his members, by opening our hands by charity, and our doors by hospitality. And Christ will esteem himself better served in these ways, than he would, were he again upon earth, by being entertained in our houses.

On one occasion, when the divine visitant made his appearance by an unexpected advent, Martha, as the head of the household, the presiding spirit of the domestic economy, with an anxiety prompted by a loving and generous heart toward her illustrious guest, not altogether, perhaps, unmixed with a desire to display her skill in good housewifery, set about providing the best and fullest entertainment the larder could afford. We can see her in the fullness of her cares and the activity of her temper, cheerfully and busily engaged in getting ready the supper. Eyeing every thing with minute inspection and provident forethought, that nothing

might be wanting that was worthy either of her Lord or of herself. Generous but mistaken woman, dost thou know so little of thy Lord as to imagine he needs or can be gratified with all this culinary care and carnal provision? Hadst thou never heard what he once said to his disciples when pressed to take food? "My meat and my drink are to do the will of my Father in heaven." Yet it was *love*, though mistaken love. I can fancy her saying to herself, "Can I ever do enough for him who deserves infinitely more than *all* I *can* do? Cheerfully will I give him the best I have, and the most I am able to perform. To give to Jesus and labor for him are my delight. He has my heart and he shall have my hand, my feet, my house, my all."

And where all this while was Mary? Eagerly availing herself of the precious opportunity afforded by the presence of the Great Teacher, sitting at his feet to receive instruction. Such a season might never return; and she was determined to make the best of it by listening to every word the Saviour said. Yet we are not to suppose that Martha had not been at the Master's feet at all, listening to *any* part of Christ's instructions, for it is said of Mary that "she *also* sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word," evidently implying that some other had been there also, which no doubt was Martha; who, just then, like some of her sex, thinking of the house and its duties while in the sanctuary and service of God, recollected the supposed necessary provision to be made, and somewhat abruptly rose up and

retired from the presence of Christ to the scene of her domestic solicitude, leaving Mary to be feasted by Christ, while she goes to make a feast *for* him. "I know not," says the good bishop already quoted, "how to censure the holy women for an excess of care to welcome her Saviour."

How apt are we to measure other people's sense of propriety, and rightness of conduct, by our own, and to blame them for not exercising their religion and expressing their love and obedience to Christ in our mode. Mary, perhaps, wondered that Martha could on any ground whatever cease to listen to the instruction of Christ, while Martha wondered no less that Mary could sit still and be a learner when she ought to have been active as a provider. Martha would be ready to blame Mary for her want of love in keeping Christ talking when she should have been caring for his refreshment; while Mary would be apt to blame Martha for the lukewarmness of her regard, in not eagerly catching every word that fell from his lips. Let us learn that all may equally love Christ, who do not take exactly the same mode of showing it. Goodness has great latitude, and is very ingenious in its modes. It is uniform in essentials, but multiform in circumstantials.

After waiting some time, and expecting Mary to come out and assist her, and after often, perhaps, casting a silent but reproachful look at Mary, as the door stood ajar, and she saw her still sitting at the feet of Jesus, Martha's patience could endure

it no longer, and in unseemly haste, and ruffled temper, and irreverent manner, she entered the room, and thus addressed herself to Christ: "Lord, carest thou not that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her that she come and help me." It was a sad speech, which, in her cooler moments, she must have condemned. It was irreverent to Christ, for it accused him in angry tone of neglect of her comfort. It was unkind to her sister, for it implied that she was wanting both in love to Christ and to herself. It was well she had one to deal with who knoweth our frame, and remembereth we are but dust. Why did she appeal first to Christ, and arraign her sister at *his* bar? Might she not have beckoned her away, or whispered in her ear? Or why, when she saw her so devoutly engaged, did she not leave her to her rapt enjoyment, and say: "Happy sister, to be thus enjoying thy Lord's presence and instructions; would I could feel at liberty from these cares, and be at thy side; but somebody must provide for the comfort of the Master, and this belongs to me." Those are not always in the right who are most forward in their appeals to God. Many are more anxious to get God on their side, than to be on the side of God; and we must therefore take heed lest we expect Christ to espouse our unjust and groundless quarrels. I am afraid there was in Martha's mind at this time a little of that envy and ill-will which is not unfrequently felt by one person at witnessing the superior piety of another. The more eminent

religion of one professor is often felt to be a reproach to those who are lukewarm and worldly, and is therefore really in some cases the cause of ill will and dislike.

We do not find that Mary uttered a syllable in reply to this vehement accusation. I can fancy her lifting up her meek and invoking eye to the Saviour, with a look which seemed to say, "Oh, my Lord, I leave the vindication of my love to thee, and to my sister, in thine hands." Gentle spirit! may we learn of thee when we are complained of for well-doing, to seal up our lips in silence, and to expect our righting from above. And how surely will Jesus undertake our cause, and bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noonday. Christ, when he might have retorted with a keen and cutting severity, replied only with a kind but faithful answer, in which he first rebuked her, and then justified and commended her sister. The very repetition of her name is instructive, as showing how much in earnest, and how serious Christ was in this act of reproof: "Martha, Martha;" as if he had said, "Oh, woman, thou art very wrong." Though the wrong-doing was out of love to him, he reproved it; for, as many as he loves, he rebukes and chastens. No faults, mistakes, or sins, are more dangerous than those which originate in misdirected love; and none should be more faithfully, yet tenderly pointed out to those who commit them, as there are none which the deceitfulness of the human heart will be so backward to see and

confess, none which it will be more ready to excuse and defend. The ill-directed love of friends is sometimes more mischievous to others than the open hostility of foes. Now observe the rebuke of Jesus. "*Thou art careful and troubled about many things—but one thing is needful.* Thy mind is full of unnecessary anxiety about those domestic matters, and hurried about by a restless agitation. And what thou discoverest on the present occasion, is too much thy wont on others. There is one thing far more important, and far more needful than all these matters, which, by losing the opportunity I now afford thee of receiving instruction, thou art sadly neglecting. I mean the care and salvation of thy immortal soul."*

* It has been contended by some, that by the one thing needful, our Lord intended to suggest to Martha, that instead of the abundance she was preparing, the many varieties of food she was about to place upon the table, one dish only was necessary, I will not deny that this might seem to harmonize with the occasion; much less will I deny that it would furnish on the part of our Lord a perpetual, and merited, and justly called-for rebuke to that unnecessary and sinful care, trouble, and expense on the part of professing Christians, to provide costly entertainments for their friends. Good John Newton has some admirable remarks on the subject of entertainments given to ministers. "Some of us would be better pleased, whatever kindness our friends design to show us, to be treated less sumptuously, and in a way more conformable to the simplicity of our Christian profession. We would not wish to be considered as avowed epicures, who can not dine well without a variety of delicacies; and if we could suppose that such cost and variety were designed to remind us how much

Having rebuked Martha, our Lord next vindicates her sister, whom she had so severely and unmeritedly reproached. "*Mary hath chosen that good part which can not be taken from her.*" By the good part, we are to understand her sitting at Christ's feet to hear his words, rather than bustling about in domestic matters. That was the good part for the moment, but I believe our Lord meant to extend his meaning in what he said to each of the sisters, to their habitual character and conduct, and as he intended, when he said to Martha, she was too careful and too much troubled about many things, to describe her usual temperament, so when he said that Mary had chosen the good part, he designed to describe her uniform attention to the high and sacred concern of religion, and to represent her as one who had given herself to the pursuit of eternal salvation. This was matter of choice, and neither of compulsion nor of unintelligent and heartless formality. She voluntarily took up a life of piety; and in doing this, had secured an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not

better we fare abroad than at home, we might think it rather an insult than a compliment." The criticism, however, which would make our Lord refer to such things, is obviously a false one; for as Mary's conduct is opposed to that of Martha's, that which she chose, the good part, must be the same as the one thing needful; and if the one thing needful means one dish, Mary's good part must also be one dish, which she chose, or provided, rather than the many which her sister was intent upon. But this is trifling with Scripture, rather than explaining it.

away. We reserve, for the conclusion of the sermon, some remarks on this description of true piety. How difficult is it to inflict reproof, and not excite anger, and bestow deserved praise without doing mischief by inflating vanity. No such injury was done in this case. The effect, however, both of the censure and of the praise, we have reason to hope, though it is not recorded, was beneficial; for, in a subsequent chapter of this scriptural history, to which we shall presently have occasion to refer, we find the two sisters equally conjoined in affection, and Martha herself considerably improved.

I shall now attempt an analysis and discriminating delineation of the character of these two sisters. I have already remarked that they were in one, and that the most important feature, alike —they were *both* pious women—they both loved Christ. And what is *religion* without love to the Saviour? In making the inquiry after true piety, fix your attention, concentrate your thoughts, terminate your researches, settle your conclusions, on this simple, but comprehensive idea—it is a scriptural, supreme, practical, grateful, love to Christ. This Martha, as we have already asserted, undoubtedly possessed, as well as Mary. She, too, notwithstanding her failings, could have returned the same answer as did Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Underneath the too great superficial earthliness of that careful and troubled mind, there burned a sacred fire of strong attachment to the Saviour. With this sameness of general char

acter, there were circumstantial differences. Just as we have seen two flowers springing from the same root, possessing the same general characteristics, yet one bending more toward the earth than the other, which stands erect, and opens its petals more expansively to the sun. Martha and Mary are the exemplars of the peculiarities of two distinct varieties of character and religious tendencies. One, the type of a naturally energetic, the other, of a quiescent mind. One exhibiting excellence in acting, the other in repose. One, a life busily devoted to externals, such as is frequently seen in this passing world; the other of calm self-devotion to the *divine*, as the one thing needful. In the one we see the contemplative, musing and feeding in silence upon holy thoughts, and looking up in rapt meditation into heaven; in the other we see the practical, now lavishing her indefatigable cares upon a brother whom she loves, and now ministering in ordinary life to a Saviour whom she adores; invoking him in the bitterness of grief, and blessing him in the joy of deliverance. In one, too much of the busy, careful, anxious housewife; in the other, perhaps, too much of the contemplative, quiescent devotee. You can not mistake all this; it is patent to every reader. There was much that was good and useful in Martha's character. She possessed great quickness, alertness, and energy, together with a certain practical ability and good sense, qualifying her both for taking a lead herself, and for giving an impulse to others; so that she was well fitted for

going through with any work to be done, and always awake to the common calls and the common cares of the ordinary domestic routine of life. And more than this, she was eminently qualified to work her way, and to help others to do the same, through those emergencies of trouble and of difficulty which not unfrequently occur in the changeful scene of human existence. It is a blessed temperament, my young friends, to have that noble hardihood, and untiring energy, and undaunted boldness of character, which can grapple with difficulty, surmount obstacles, and, instead of being crushed by misfortune, can rise triumphantly above it.

But, then, such a temperament has its dangers, and Martha fell into them. She was impetuous, irritable, intolerant, and somewhat rude. She was angry that others were not as energetic as herself, a common fault with persons of such a turn of mind. She could not make allowance for their difference of disposition. She was, however, an excellent woman after all. "Mary was characterized by more depth of thought, more reflection, more sensibility. She was more easily engrossed by an affecting scene, or any spiritual subject; more alive, at any time, to one single profound impression, and apt to be abstracted from other concerns."

We see the characteristics of these two sisters brought out in an affecting scene in their after-history, to which I will now advert, and for the particulars of which I refer you to the eleventh and twelfth chapters of the gospel by John. Sickness

in an alarming form entered this little family at Bethany, and arrested Lazarus. Jesus was at that time in Bethabara, about thirty miles from Bethany. In the agony of their grief, the sisters dispatched a messenger to Christ, under supposition that he would come and restore their brother to health. Lazarus, it should seem, expired soon after the messenger left. On receiving the information, Christ, who knew all about the matter, and who knew also what he would do, lingered upon the spot two whole days, in order that the miracle he was about to work might, from the circumstances of a longer continuance of death, be the more signal and convincing. At length he set out for Bethany. Observe in this act his usual mercy, to travel on foot thirty miles, to restore a dead man. How delightful is it thus to trace the Saviour in his journeys, justifying the description which is given of him, as one "who ever went about doing good." Martha was the first to receive information of his approach on this occasion to Bethany, either because, as the mistress of the house, the intelligence was first conveyed to her, or because, from her bustling and active disposition, she was most likely to hear of it. And now, in character with herself, she lost not a moment, but immediately hastened forth to meet her Lord, to render him the offices of courtesy and respect, to inform him of the calamity that had befallen them, to pour out to him the sorrows of her heart, and to receive the expressions of his sympathy. She is now, as ever, ready to be up and

doing. But Mary, either not being informed of the coming of Jesus, or absorbed in a deeper grief, sat still in the house, and waited for the entrance of the Comforter. This intensity of sorrow did not escape the notice of the Jews; hence, when at length she arose at the call of her sister to go forth and meet her Lord, they said, "She goeth unto the grave to weep there." They said this from a knowledge of her character, for they made no such remark on Martha when *she* went forth. *She* might be bent on other errands. Mary could go—only to weep.

It is well observed by Dr. Candlish, in his discourse on this subject: "In different circumstances the same natural temperament may be either an advantage or a snare. Martha was never so much occupied in the emotion of one subject or scene, as not to be on the alert and ready for the call to another. This was a disadvantage to her when she was so hurried that she could not withdraw herself to wait upon the Word of Life. It is an advantage to her now, that she can, with comparative ease, shake off her depression, and hasten of her own accord to meet her Lord. The same profound feeling, again, which made Mary the most attentive listener before, makes her the most helpless sufferer now; and disposes her almost to nurse her grief, until Jesus, her best comforter, sends specially and emphatically to rouse her. Nor is it an insignificant circumstance, that it is the ever-active Martha who carries to her more downcast sister the awakening message; so ought sisters in Christ to minis-

ter to one another, and so may the very difference of their characters make them mutually the more helpful." "She went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come and calleth for thee."*

The two sisters, now deeply affected with a sense of their loss, meet their Lord, and exhibit, in their interview, the same difference of character as pervades their whole history. Martha's grief is not so overwhelming as to prevent her utterance; she is calm, cool, and collected enough to enter into argument. She can talk of her sorrow, can refer to her loss, can express her faith, and even modestly suggest to Christ, in a delicate and covert petition, the possibility of his restoring her brother. It was different with Mary. In piety, of course, she is equal to her sister, but in composure and serenity she is inferior. Her gentle spirit is paralyzed with grief. All she can *do* is to cast herself prostrate at the feet of Christ; all she can say, is to sob out, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." We can not pass over one more characteristic, exquisitely delicate, and true to nature. Jesus, having asked where Lazarus had been laid, is conducted to the grave, which was a cave with a stone upon it, and he gives orders to take away the stone. It was not Mary who offered the objection founded on the commencement of putrefaction; *she* is silent still in the unutterable

* "Scripture Characters," by Dr. Candlish. An exceedingly interesting and instructive volume.

agony of her grief, and the deep reverence of her soul before the Lord. But Martha's marked officiousness makes her forward, when it might have been more becoming to be dumb, and to stand in awe. Dr. Candlish, with nice and just discrimination, points out the wise and considerate manner, which will be observed by every judicious critical reader of the narrative, in which Christ adapts his behavior toward the two sisters. Martha's distress was of such a nature that it admitted of discussion and discourse. Jesus accordingly spoke to her, and led her to speak to him, and made to her, as suited her circumstances, some of his sublimest communications touching the resurrection of the body, and the life of the soul. While to Mary, who is rapt in such deep grief, he shows his sympathy in a different way. He is much more pro foundly moved. He does not reply to her in words, for her words are few. Sorrow has choked her utterance, and overmastered her soul. But the sight of one so dear to him, lying in such helpless grief at his feet, is an appeal to him far stronger than any supplication. And his own responsive sigh is an answer more comforting than any promise. "When Jesus, therefore, saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping who came with her, he groaned in spirit, and was troubled." And when he had asked of the bystanders where they had laid him, and received the reply, "Come and see," —like Joseph, "he could no longer refrain himself,"—"Jesus wept."

"Oh, most blessed mourner, with whose tears thy Saviour mingles his own! Oh, sympathy most unparalleled! To each of the two stricken and afflicted ones our Lord addressed the very consolation that was most congenial. With Martha, Jesus discoursed and reasoned: with Mary, 'Jesus wept.'" It is thus He who knoweth our frame adapts the communications of his grace, as our temperament and circumstances most need them.

Before we quit this scene of domestic grief, and pass to another incident in the history of Martha and Mary, shall we not turn aside to see this great sight exhibited in the conduct of Jesus? I know I am giving the history of Martha and Mary, but was not Christ so blended with it as to form a part of it, and to constitute the glory of it? Shall I take you to the grave of Lazarus, point you to the mourning sisters, and omit to notice the weeping Saviour? Shall I pass over that short but wondrous verse, which tells us with such sublime simplicity, JESUS WEPT? every view of Christ is glorious, whether reigning upon his throne in the glory he had with the Father before the world was; or agonizing in the garden, when he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood; or hanging upon the cross, a great and terrible sacrifice for sin; or rising from the grave with the keys of death and of hell at his girdle; or ascending to his glory amid the retinue and acclamations of angels. Now all these manifestations produce feelings of awe and wonder. But, oh, his *weeping* at the grave of Lazarus! The

Son of God in tears—not as on the Mount of Olivet, when he signed the death-warrant of Jerusalem, and looked onward from the destruction of the guilty city, to the torments of eternity of which its fires and plagues were a dark type—no, his tears on this occasion were those of human tenderness, the exquisite sympathies of his noble and perfect manhood with the afflictions of those whom he loved. How many lessons are taught us by those tears. Have they not vindicated and defended humanity from the insults and injuries of stoicism, and made chastened sorrow one of its genuine workings? Have they not consecrated sympathy as one of the virtues of humanity? Have they not made tenderness the adornment of greatness? Have they not raised friendship to the rank of a Christian excellence? Have they not proved that he has not the mind of Christ who knows not how to weep for the woes of our nature? Do they not prove that if tears are woman's eloquence, they are man's rhetoric also?

Jesus wept. There were critics, in ancient, times, who, with ruthless fingers, cancelled this verse, as thinking it beneath the dignity of Jesus to weep. Barbarian critics, stoical scholars, ye would have robbed the Scriptures of one of their brightest gems, and despoiled the character of the Saviour of one of its richest beauties.

But now after this, not I hope ungraceful episode, let us pass on to one more scene in the history of this happy, holy family. About four months after

the resurrection of Lazarus, a supper was given to our Lord and his disciples; most likely on account of the resurrection of Lazarus, who with his sisters were, perhaps, relations of the host, by a man named Simon, who had been a leper, and had in all probability been healed by Christ. At this supper Lazarus, and Martha, and Mary, were present. Here also we find the separate identity of the character of the two sisters maintained with unbroken continuity and unvarying uniformity. Martha, ever active, ever generously attentive to the comforts of others, ever to be found where energy is required, "served." She had assisted in the preparation, and now busies herself in waiting upon the guests, and especially upon the most distinguished of them all, her Lord and Master, whom she loved. Not so with Mary; in that assembly all were forgotten by her but one, on whom she gazed long, with the silent rapture of love and devotion, waiting and watching for her opportunity to give him her meditated, practical, and personal expression of adoring gratitude and affection. While he was reclining at table on his couch, according to the custom of the times, instead of sitting upright, as we do, in chairs, she stole behind him, and, unrestrained by the presence of the guests, brought out her alabaster box of spikenard, with which she anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair. She gave him the most costly article of her toilet, and employed for him the most ornamental part of her person. For who that loves Christ will not give

him the richest and best of their possessions? Was not this Mary all over! Sensibility, grati tude, affection. Does it not harmonize with the listener and mourner whom we have already witnessed? From one of the company—I mean the traitor who sold his Master for thirty pieces of sil ver—this act of pious affection and liberality drew forth a censure; and, under a hypocritical profession of concern for the poor, he expressed his regret that the precious ointment had not been sold and given to the stock of charity. Ah, how often has a plea of charity served as a cloak for covetousness! True it is, as a general principle, that great expense in external magnificence, even when designed to honor Christ, would most commonly be better employed in feeding and clothing his members; but there are some extraordinary occasions when a sort of profuseness can not be blamed. And every thing which is given to Christ is acceptable to him when, as in this case, it is love that gives. And happy is the person who knows, like Mary, to make that an offering and expression of love to the Saviour, which, in the days of worldliness and folly, was offered at the shrine of vanity. Jesus becomes her vindicator against the cavils of Judas, and pronounced an eulogium which the loftiest monarch on earth might covet to receive. "*She hath done what she could.*" Of how few can this be said; and yet what lower rule of conduct ought any of us to prescribe for himself than this. Is less than what we *can* do for Christ, *enough* to do for him? Have

you ever weighed in seriousness of mind this noble testimony, "SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD." What can *you* do for Christ? What *have* you done? What ought you to do? What will you do? Be Mary's Memorial yours. And to what renown did it raise her? "Wherever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." How literally has this been fulfilled. Wherever the Bible has gone, this—in one hundred and fifty languages—has been published to the world. All nations, and persons of all nations, shall know of Mary's alabaster box of ointment consecrated to Jesus, and shall venerate her memory for this act of pious zeal. The world is a poor judge in matters relating to God; and God takes delight in honoring those actions which the world blames, through a spirit different from his. Happy are those who are content with the approbation of him who sees the heart. The contradictions and groundless censures of men pass away like the clouds that occasionally vail the sun; but the good actions which are the subject of their envy or their calumny, will, like the great luminary, remain forever. Good works invest the name with enduring renown, and embalm the memory with an odor more precious and lasting than the perfume of Mary's spikenard.

Reference has been made to this incident, and especially to the praise bestowed by our Lord upon Mary, to prove that the contemplative life is more

acceptable in the sight of God than the active. It is this mistaken notion which has led to the establishment of conventual institutions by Romanism; a system which is no less opposed to the dictates of revelation than it is to the impulses of nature and the welfare of society; which does violence to humanity in order to do honor to Christianity; stifles all the instinctive yearnings of the heart, to give better opportunity for the exercise of devotion; and which, as a natural and necessary consequence, has deposited a muddy soil of immorality upon the surface of Christendom, where the fruits of righteousness can not grow, though the weeds of superstition may flourish with a rank luxuriance. The supposition that a superior sanctity attaches to celibacy is one of the supports on which the whole Papal system rests, and has been the cause of more abomination in the world than any other single opinion claiming to have a religious sanction. That the history before us will furnish no support to this system, is evident. Mary, neither at the time spoken of was a nun, nor did she ever become such. Hers was a piety that blended with, and sanctified the duties of social life. Whatever was her devotional taste and disposition, it did not drive her from her home, nor cut the tie of her relationships. The design of our Lord's language is not so much to form comparison between two courses of life, so separate and distinct as not to allow of the mixture of one with the other, as to administer a rebuke to a person who, pursuing one course, had too much

neglected the other. Not to prevent Mary from attending at all to temporal matters, but to engage Martha to less anxiety about them, and to a stricter regard to things unseen and eternal.

And now, my young friends, what, in the review of this beautiful little narrative, do I recommend? Which of the two characters do I enjoin you to imitate? I answer, all that was excellent in both, without the imperfections of either. Martha's household diligence, without her excessive anxiety, united with Mary's fervent devotion, without her somewhat superabundant sensibility. So far as it could be said of Martha, "She looked well to the ways of her household," let my female friends imitate her due attention to home duties, her cleverness, her diligence, her dispatch, her generous attention to the comfort of her guests, especially those who represent their Lord. Let them be skilled in all the important functions of good housewifery. Let them, if wives, know how to make home comfortable for their husbands; if mothers, for their children; and if widely connected, for their friends. Hospitality is a virtue which should never be wanting in a female heart. She who will not seek to please her husband's friends, but receives them with a frown, will soon learn to leave off pleasing him, and make their home unhappy for all parties. But, then, let all this be without *carefulness*, and with that graceful and pleasant ease which order, method, punctuality and dispatch will command.

There are various kinds of slavery in the world, and many classes of victims of this cruel bondage. There is, among others, the *domestic* slave, whose tyrant is her husband, and the scene of her bondage, her home. His *parsimony* is so niggardly that he will not allow her help enough to do the work of the house, and, therefore, she must unite the character of a servant with that of a wife, a mistress, and a mother; his *selfishness* is so engrossing and exacting, that his demands for his own personal ease and indulgence are incessant, and leave her no time for the consideration of her own comfort; and, withal, his *temper* is so bad, that all her assiduities to please are unavailing to give satisfaction and to avert the sallies of his irritability, discontent, and complaint. When such a man declaims against negro slavery, let him begin the work of emancipation at home, by raising the oppressed woman he holds in bondage there, from the condition of a drudge, into the station of a wife. How can *she* help being careful and troubled about many things?

But, then, there are cases, not a few, in which the slavery is self-imposed. The bondage comes from the wife herself, from which the husband would gladly release her, but she will not let him. Some are slaves to *neatness*, and make their fidgetting anxiety about this matter a misery to themselves and all around them. Others to *fashion*, and are always careful and troubled about elegance and refinement. Others to *domestic display*, parties, and amusements, and are always full of anxiety about

objects of time and sense are but as the smallest dust of the balance. It will promote every other lawful and valuable interest on earth. It has been pronounced indispensable by those who are most capable of giving an opinion. *God* has declared it to be needful, by giving his only-begotten Son to die for it upon the cross. Jesus Christ has declared it to be needful, by enduring all the agonies of the cross to obtain it. Angels have pronounced it needful, by their solicitude for the salvation of men. Apostles, martyrs, reformers, missionaries, and ministers have given their emphatic testimony to its necessity, by their labors, prayers, tears, and blood. Your own judgment, in the cooler moments of reflection, declares, by its enlightened dictates, its necessity; so does your conscience when listening to sermons, or you are suffering affliction; so does your heart, when the world stands revealed before you in its vanity, emptiness, and deceit. It is needful now in youth, to be your guide; it will be no less so as your comforter amid the vicissitudes of life; your prop under the infirmities of age; your living hope amid the agonies of dying hours; your defense in the awful day of judgment, and your preparation for the felicities of heaven. Must not that which alone can do this, be indispensable, and be, in fact, the *one* thing needful? Dwell, I beseech you, upon this representation. If religion were as miserable and as melancholy as your mistaken notions of it represent, yet it is *need*ful. It is not what you may *not* have, and yet do well with-

out it—a superfluity, but not a necessary. No. It is *needful.* It is not what other things can *substitute*; the privation of which can be made up by others. In the absence of this, you want the most necessary thing in the universe—you must be poor amid abounding wealth. And it is the only thing that *is* indispensable. There are many other things which may be desirable, valuable, pleasurable, and may be lawfully pursued, but they are not indispensable. This *is* absolutely so to solid happiness here and eternal felicity hereafter. Oh young people, call in your vagrant thoughts, your discursive inquiries, your divided and scattered activities, and concentrate them upon this *one* thing. Settle it with yourselves, that whatever else you may not have, you *must* have this. It is well at the outset of life to be informed by an authority that is infallible what is *most* necessary for the pilgrim upon earth. Let me entreat you to remember your *own* interest in it; it is necessary for *you*, whose eye shall read this page. Do, therefore, inquire—solemnly and seriously inquire—into your own conduct in reference to it. Say to yourselves, "Have I thought seriously about it? have I seen the importance of it? has it lain with a due and an abiding weight upon my mind? has it brought me in penitence, prayer, and faith to Christ as a Saviour? am I acting in life as if I considered religion the one thing needful? am I willing or striving to make every thing subordinate to it—my interests, my tastes, my pleasures, my passions?"

And then, how transcendently *excellent* is true religion. It is the "*good part* which shall never be taken from us." Excellent it is, in every view we can take of it, for it is the reception of the first truth, and the enjoyment of the chief good. It makes *us* good, for it makes us like God, and brings good *to* us, for it leads us to *enjoy* God. It was the bliss of Adam, in Paradise, and *is* the felicity of the spirits made perfect in heaven. It is the beginning of heaven upon earth, and will be the consummation of heaven when we have left the earth. It is far better than knowledge, or wealth, or fame, or pleasure, for it will stand by us when all these things leave us.

Yes, it is "the good part, *which can never be taken from us.*" Neither force nor fraud can deprive us of this. It is above the vicissitudes of life, and unaffected by the changes of fortune. Oh, it is glorious to think of our possessing something that bids defiance to all the assaults of men or demons! Go where you will, it will go with you. It is as inseparable from you, till you yourself shall abandon it, as your soul is from your body. How much, then, is included in that precious declaration, "The good part which can not be taken from you," which shall remain *with* you, *in* you, *for* you—when friends have left you—health has left you—fortune has left you—a portion all-sufficient, inalienable, eternal.

Religion is a *voluntary* thing. "Mary hath *chosen* that good part which can not be taken from her." It is not the external compulsion of author-

ity, nor the internal compulsion of fear, but the free choice of love. It is not mere blind, unintelligent custom; an unmeaning, heartless round of ceremonies, performed without motive or design. No, it is the free-will offering of the soul to God, who says, "*Give* me thine heart;" and to whom the soul replies, "I *give* myself to thee." Where there is no choice, there is no religion. Hence the language of Moses to the children of Israel, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore *choose* life, that both thou and thy seed may live." So is it with you and me at this moment. There, on the one hand, is religion, with all its duties, and its privileges, its present enjoyments, and its future eternal happiness; this is life—the life of the soul now, and eternal life hereafter. There, on the other hand, is ungodliness, with all its sins and sorrows here, and its unutterable and eternal miseries hereafter. There are you, so fearfully and wonderfully placed between the two. And here am I—O solemn, responsible, and momentous position!—to urge you by every motive that can appeal to your reason, your heart, your conscience, and even your self-love, to urge you to choose life. You *must* make your election. You can not evade the choice. One or the other must be yours. Were you to attempt a neutrality, it is impossible. Those that do not choose life, by true religion, are considered by God as choosing death. By what witnesses are you surrounded in

this crisis of your being? What spectators are looking on upon this eventful scene of your history? Parents are waiting, watching, and praying, for your decision on the side of eternal life. With silent, breathless earnestness, they are agonizing for your soul and her destiny. Ministers are fixing their minds intently upon your situation, and, in yearning anxiety for your welfare, are saying, "O that they may choose the good part which can never be taken from them!" Angels, with benevolence, hover over you, ready to commence their benevolent activities, and become as ministering spirits to your salvation. Devils, with malignity, are collecting to rejoice, with such delight as demons can experience, in your election of death. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are waiting, witnessing, and ready to assist your election. Yes, such value is there attaching to one human soul—with such importance is its decision for the choice or refusal of religion invested, that heaven, earth, and hell, are in some measure moved by the scene of its being called to choose between life and death, and thus three worlds are interested in its decision. Make, then, your election. Pause, ponder, and pray; it is a choice which eternity will confirm, to your unutterable torment, or to your ineffable felicity. Almighty God, direct their choice!

To Young Mothers.

"I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice"—2 TIMOTHY i. 5.

"The aged women likewise, that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."—TITUS ii. 3-5.

WHAT associations with all that is lovely are formed by that blissful word—a mother! To that sound the tenderest emotions of the human heart, whether it beat in the bosom of the savage or the sage, awaken. The beauty of that term is seen, and its power felt, alike by the prince and the peasant, the rustic and the philosopher. It is one of the first words which infant lips are taught to lisp, and the charm of which the infant heart is first to feel. It is a note to the music of which it is difficult to say whose soul most responsively vibrates, that of the parent or the child. Humanity, however semi-brutalized by oppression, by ignorance, and even by vice, has rarely been sunk so low

as to have the last spark of maternal love extinguished, or the last sensibility of this kind crushed out of it. This strength of woman's love to her child must be turned to good account, and be directed in its exercises to the best and most useful purposes. There is this difference, and it is a momentous one, between the maternal instinct of the lower tribes and that of woman; the former goes no further than provision and protection; *training* forms no part of it. The same power which taught the parent bird or beast what habits belong to its nature, teaches also the offspring. The latter, without any pains bestowed on its education, or any solicitude cherished for its welfare, will learn the lessons of its existence by the intuitions of nature, and be capable of rising to its specific perfection, unaided either by the parent or the teacher. Not so the young of the human species; *they* also require provision and protection; but more than this they need *instruction.* And who must be their instructor? *First of all, and chief of all, their* MOTHER.

But, before we reason and descant upon the subject of a mother's duties, let us look at FACTS. It is universally admitted that scarcely any great man has appeared in our world who did not owe much, if not most, in the formation of his character, to a mother's influence. In a very useful little volume, by Dr. Jabez Burns, entitled, "The Mothers of the Wise and Good," there is an extended series of biographical memorials of pious and judicious moth

ers, and eminent sons, amounting to about fifty, in which are included Alfred the Great, Lord Bacon, Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Samuel Johnson, Sir William Jones, General Washington, among the illustrious of this world; together with St. Augustin, President Edwards, Dr. Doddridge, Dr. Dwight, Mr. Newton, Mr. Cecil, Leigh Richmond, and many others among the good; all of whom were blessed with pious or eminently judicious mothers, and owed to them their eminence in the church or in the world. From among these I select the following account of Mr. Cecil: Richard Cecil, of London, when but a young man, had pursued a bold and determined career, till, sunk in sin, hardening himself in infidelity, and instilling the same principles into others, there seemed no prospect of any change. His excellent mother, however, had performed her part, and still remembered that it was good, not only to pray always, but not to faint, or desist upon any account. At last, one night he lay contemplating the case of his mother: "I see," said he within himself, "two unquestionable facts: first, my mother is greatly afflicted in circumstances, body, and mind; and yet I see that she cheerfully bears up under all, by the support she derives from constantly repairing to her closet and her Bible; secondly, that she has a secret spring of comfort, of which I know nothing; while I, who give an unbounded loose to my appetites, and seek pleasure by every means, seldom or ever find it. If, however, there is such a secret in religion, why

may I not find it as well as my mother?" He instantly rose and began to pray, but was soon damped, by recollecting that much of his mother's comfort seemed to arise from her faith in Christ. Now, thought he, "this Christ I have ridiculed: He stands much in my way, and can form no part of my prayers." In utter confusion he lay down again; but, in process of time, conviction of sin continuing, his difficulties were gradually removed, his objections answered. He now listened to those admonitions of his mother, which he had before affected to receive with pride and scorn; yet they had fixed themselves in his heart like a barbed arrow; and though the effects were concealed from her observation, yet tears would fall from his eyes as he passed along the street, from the impression she had made on his mind. Now he would discourse with her, and hear her without outrage, which revived her hopes, especially as he then attended the public worship of God. Thus he made some progress, but felt no small difficulty in separating from his favorite connections. Light, however, broke into his mind, till at last he discovered that Christ Jesus, so far from "standing in the way," as he once thought, was, indeed, "*the way, the truth, and the life*, to all who come unto God by him."

At a pastoral conference held not long since, at which about one hundred and twenty American clergymen, united in the bonds of a common faith, were assembled, each was invited to state the hu-

man instrumentality to which, under the Divine blessing, he attributed a change of heart. How many of these, think you, gave the honor of it to their mother? Of one hundred and twenty, above one hundred! Here, then, are facts, which are only selections from myriads of others, to prove a mother's power, and to demonstrate, at the same time, her responsibility. But how shall we account for this? What gives her this influence? What is the secret of her power? Several things.

First, there is, no doubt, the ordinance of God. He that created us, and formed the ties of social life, and who gives all the sweet influences and tender susceptibilities of our various relationships, appointed it to be so, that maternal power over the soul of her child should be thus mighty. It is God's ordinance, and the woman who forgets or neglects this, is disobedient to a Divine institute. God has made the child to be peculiarly susceptible of this power over his nature.

Then comes a mother's love. This is stronger, at any rate, more tender, than even a father's. There is more of instinct, if not of reason, in her affection. She has had more to do with the physical being of her child, having borne him in her womb, and fed him from her breast, and watched him in his cradle: all this naturally and necessarily generates a feeling which nothing else can produce. Now love is the great motive power in, and for, human conduct. "I drew them," said God, "with bands of a man, with cords of love." Here is the

true philosophy of both man's natural constitution and of evangelical religion. Human nature is made to be moved and governed by love; to be drawn with the cords of affection, rather than to be dragged with the chains of severity. Now, woman's heart is made to love; and this comes out more gently, sweetly, and constrainingly, upon the child, than from the other sex. It makes her more patient, more ingenious, more influential. Her words are more soft, her smile more winning, her frown more commanding, because less terrific and repulsive. The little floweret she has to nurture, opens its petals more readily to the mild beams of her countenance. Hence, to repeat an expression of Monod, already quoted in a former sermon, "The greatest moral power in the world is that which a mother exercises over her young child." Nor is there much exaggeration in that other expression, "She who rocks the cradle, rules the world;" an expression, the truth and force of which will appear to be founded on the next particular.

The mother has first and most to do with the character, while it is yet in that flexible state to receive its shape. The earliest exercises of thought, emotion, will, and conscience, are all carried on under her eye. She has to do not only with the *body* in its infancy, but with the *soul* in its childhood. Both mind and heart are in her hands at that period, when they take their first start for good or for evil. The children learn to lisp their first words, and to form their first ideas, under her teaching

They are almost always in her company, and are, insensibly to themselves, and imperceptibly to her, receiving a right or wrong bias from her. The first model of character they witness is hers; the first exhibitions of right and wrong in practice are what they see in her. They are the constant observers of the passions, the graces, the virtues, and the faults, which come forth in her words, temper, and actions. She is, therefore, unconsciously to herself, educating them, not only by designed teaching, but by all she does or says in their presence. Children are imitative creatures. During the minority of reason, imitation is the regent of the soul, and they who are least swayed by the former are most governed by the latter. Speech is the effect of imitation, not intuition; and as children so early and so insensibly learn to repeat sounds, so may they also learn to copy actions and habits. This, of course, applies to the mother in a fuller sense than it does to the father, just because she is more constantly with them in the early stages of their existence. It is, therefore, of immense importance that every one who sustains this relation should have a high idea of her own power. She *must* be deeply and duly impressed with the potency of her influence. This has peculiar force in reference to the mothers of the middling, and still more to those of the working classes. In the upper circles of society, the task of educating, and even supporting the infant, is usually devolved upon hirelings. The nursery is not much, it is to be feared, the re

sort of many titled or wealthy mothers. Aristocratic habits, in some cases, can be scarcely made to square with those of a maternal kind. Happy women, then, who are not lifted by rank or wealth out of the circle of those tender and constant assiduities which an infant family require. Happy women, out of whose hand fashionable etiquette or luxurious indolence has not taken what the poet so pleasingly characterizes as the—

> "Delightful task to rear the tender thought,
> And teach the young idea how to shoot."

Mothers, then, should be thoroughly acquainted with the work that is allotted to them. I speak not of the *physical* training of the children; this is not my department, nor *primarily* even their intellectual culture; but their social, moral, and religious education. A mother's object and duty are, *the formation of character*. She has not merely to communicate knowledge, but habits. Her department especially is to cultivate the heart, and to regulate the life. Her aim must be, not only what her children are to know, but what they are to *be* and *do*. She is to look at them as the future members of society, heads of families of their own, and probationers for eternity. This, I repeat, must be taken up as the primary idea—*the formation of character for both worlds*. Governesses, tutors, masters, will most probably be employed in the future intellectual training; but a mother's part is from infancy to form habits. Many have no other idea of education than

the communication of knowledge. Much has been said of late years on the distinction between instruction and education. They are by no means synonymous. The etymology of the two words is worth considering. To "instruct," is derived from a Latin word, which signifies to put on or in. To instruct is, therefore, simply to put knowledge into the mind. The word "educate," comes also from a Latin word, which signifies to lead or draw forth. To educate, therefore, means to draw out the faculties of the soul, to call into exercise and invigorate its intellectual and moral powers. Both together constitute the duty of those who have to form the character. Ideas must be poured in, and the recipient must be taught what do with them. We hear much said about choosing the best masters, and a great deal more about intellectuality, accomplishments, and other things of this nature, which may be well enough in their place and in their measure, but they are only subordinate to something higher and better. They are only the tinsel work in some cases, which embellishes the casket, and attracts the eye of the beholder; while the invaluable jewel it contains is left to comparative neglect. These things are not the whole of education, nor even the best part of it. They are only the polish of the surface, but not the solid gold of the substance. A mother should look upon her offspring with the idea, "That child has to live in two worlds, and to act a part in both; and it is my duty to begin his education for both, and to lay in infancy the foundation

of his character and happiness for time and eternity too. What ought to be my qualifications, and my diligence, for such a task?"

Ah, what? *Deep thoughtfulness* certainly on the momentous nature of your charge. It is a somewhat awful thing to be a parent, especially a mother, and to have this training of men and women, both for time and for eternity. A distinguished philosopher has said that "all the world is but the pupil and disciple of female influence." Every mother, therefore, has, so far as her individual influence goes, the world for her scholar. "Oh, woman, thy child's welfare, for all time and all eternity too, depends much upon thy conduct toward him during the period he is under your influence in the first years of his being. To you is committed the care of the infant's body, the healthfulness, the vigor, and comfort of which for all his future existence upon earth depend much upon you. What would be your feelings of poignant remorse, if by any neglect of yours, if by a fall, or an accident, the result of your carelessness, the poor babe was injured in his spine, or distorted in his limbs. Oh, to see that young cripple ever presenting to you the sad memorials of your guilty neglect. Ruined for life in bodily comfort. Yet what is this to the sadder spectacle of a deformed and crippled soul—a character distorted into crooked and frightful shapes—and to have the tormenting reflection—this, this was the result of your neglect! The poor child in the former case may have compensation by all the sweet influences of religious

submission and consolation, and the distressed mother assuage the anguish of remorse by the thought that her neglect may have been among the all things that worked together for good to her son; but where in the latter case is consolation to be obtained, or who can wonder that such a Rachel mourning over her lost child, and lost through her neglect, refuses to be comforted.

Qualify yourself for maternal duties, above all things, *by sincere and eminent piety*. A mother should never forget that those little engaging creatures which sport about the room so gayly and so innocently, with all the unconsciousness of childhood, are young immortals; beings destined to eternity; creatures placed on earth on a probation for heaven; and that much will depend upon her whether their everlasting ages shall be spent by them in torment or in bliss. This is an all but overwhelming idea. It would almost seem as if solicitude about this matter would be of so overpowering a degree as to extinguish parental delight. For a mother to look at the babe that is feeding at her breast, and smiling so sweetly in her face, as if it meant the thanks it had not yet learnt to speak; or to watch his slumbers in the cradle, breathing so softly as if he lived without breathing at all, and then to feel her soul shivering and shuddering in the dark shadow passing over her from such a reflection as this: "Oh, shouldst thou live to be a profligate in this world, and a fiend in the next!" Or, instead of having a reflection so harrowing to

every maternal feeling, how delightful to exult in the hope that that dear babe will be a holy, useful, happy Christian on earth, and then a glorified immortal in heaven. Such reflections ought to be sometimes in the mind of every parent. All should realize the sublime idea that their houses are the seminaries for eternity, their children the scholars, they the teachers, and evangelical religion the lesson. Yes, with every infant born into the family comes the injunction from God—"Take this child and bring it up for me." It is one of God's own children by creation, sent to be trained up in the way he should go, that is, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Those parents who neglect the *religious* education of their children, whatever else they may impart, are more guilty than Herod. He slew the children of others—they their own. He slew only the body—they the soul. He slew them by hired assassins—they slay them themselves. We shudder at the cruelties of those who sacrificed their babes to Moloch; but how much more dreadful an immolation do *they* practice, who offer up their sons and daughters to Satan by neglecting their religious education, and leaving them to grow up in ignorance of God and their eternal destiny.

But *can* any one, *will* any one teach, or teach *effectually*, that religion which they do not feel and practice themselves? Therefore, we say a mother's heart must be deeply imbued with piety herself, if she would teach it to her children. Without this, can she have the will to teach, the heart to pray,

the right to hope? Oh, mothers, can you conceive of a higher, nobler elevation to which in your maternal relation you can rise, than when, to the opening mind of your wondering child, you give the first idea of God? Or when you direct him to that Divine babe who was born at Bethlehem, was subject to his parents, grew into that Saviour who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me," and took them in his arms, and blessed them, and then died for their salvation upon the cross. Or, than when you talk to them of heaven, the dwelling-place of God and of his angels. Oh, to see the first look of holy inquisitiveness, and the first tear of infant piety start into the eye—to hear the first question of concern, or the first breathing of prayer from infant lips! How has many a woman's heart, amid such scenes, swelled with delight, till, in an ecstacy of feeling, she sunk upon her knees, and breathed a mother's prayer over the child of her heart, while he looked wonderingly up, and felt a mysterious power come over him, which he could neither fully express nor understand. Your religion, if it be genuine, will teach you at once the greatness of the work, and your own insufficiency to perform it aright in your own strength. Your business is to train mortals for earth, and immortal beings for God, heaven, and eternity. Even an apostle, in the view of such an object, exclaimed: "And who is sufficient for these things?" Your work, as to its design, is the same as his, and you, like him, have the depravity of human nature to

contend with, and all the difficulties arising from your own weakness and sinfulness. A mistake, either in your sentiments, your feelings, or your example, may be fatal to your children's eternal welfare. Cultivate, then, a trembling consciousness of your own insufficiency, and cast yourselves, by believing, constant, and fervent prayer, upon God. Be, in an eminent sense, praying mothers. Distrust yourselves, and then clothe yourselves, by believing prayer, with Omnipotence.

Do not forget what we have already said, that affection is the golden key fitted by God to the wards of the lock in every human heart, to the application of which the bolts that nothing else could move will fly back and open with ease. Severity is out of place in any one, but most of all in woman. But beware of allowing affection to degenerate into a fond and foolish indulgence. A judicious love is as remote from this, on the one hand, as it is from moroseness and cruelty on the other. For if severity has slain its thousands, an injudicious and pampering indulgence has slain its tens of thousands. Fathers are apt to err in the former extreme, mothers in the latter. And it not unfrequently happens that these extremes are played off against each other. The father, afraid that the mother will spoil the child by indulgence, adopts a harsh treatment to counteract the mischief of his wife's excessive fondness; while the wife compensates to the child for the severity of her husband by her own excessive attention to the

child's gratification. Thus, like the sharp frost by night, and the hot sun by day, operating in spring to the destruction of the blossom on which their antagonistic influences are made to bear, the opposing treatment of the parents ruins the hapless child that is the subject of it.*

Still, while I enjoin affection, it must not be allowed to impair authority. A parent must not be a tyrant, so neither must he be a slave to his children. It is a painful, and to the parents a reproachful spectacle, to see a family like a state where rebellion reigns rampant, the father deposed, the scepter broken, and the insurgent children possessed of sovereign rule. A mother, as well as a father, must be obeyed; and it is her own fault if she is not. A persevering system of government, where the reins are held tightly in the hand of love, will be sure to produce submission at last. But

* One of the most artistic as well as instructive characters in that wonderful book which has burst on this country as well as the United States of America, as a literary phenomenon, is that little imp of ignorance and wickedness which slavery had made half idiot and half demon, but who, by the touch of the magic wand of love, rose up from the degradation into which the heel of oppression had trodden her, a new creature in Christ Jesus. There is more of the true philosophy of human nature and of Christianity in that example, than in all the volumes which writers on humanity have ever written. And had that extraordinary volume been written for the exhibition of no other character than that, by which to show what love *can* do for the most hopeless subjects, it would not have been published in vain.

then it must be a mixture of kindness, wisdom, and authority. Submission must be felt by a child to be a duty yielded to authority, and not merely a something won by affection. Authority must not stiffen into severity, nor love degenerate into coaxing. Commands should be obeyed, not only because it is *pleasant* but *right* to do so.

A judicious mother will exercise much *discrimination*, and adapt her treatment to the disposition of her children. There are as many varieties of temperament in some families as there are children. No two are precisely alike in their minds and character any more than in their persons. One is forward and obtrusive, and should be checked and rebuked —another is timid and retiring, and needs to be encouraged and emboldened. One is more easily wrought upon by appeals to hope—another by fear. One is too close and reserved, and needs to have frankness and communicativeness encouraged—another is too open and ingenuous, and should be taught caution and self-restraint. Every child should be a separate study. Quackery should be banished from education as well as from medicine. One treatment will no more suit all minds, than one medicine or kind of food, all bodies. A woman who does not know the peculiar dispositions of *all* her children, and does not adapt her treatment to them, must be a very indifferent mother.

The woman who would fulfill the duties of her relationship, must *surrender herself to her mission*, and be content to make some sacrifices, and endure

some privations. Who can witness the patient submission of the mother-bird to such solitude and self-denial, during the term of incubation, without admiration at that quiet and willing separation which instinct teaches her to make from her usual liberty and enjoyments? A woman must be willing, for the sake of her children, to do, under the influence of reason and religion, what the bird does from the unintelligent impulses of nature. Her children are a charge for which she must forego some of the enjoyments of social life, and even some of the pleasures of social religion. She who would have a maternal power over her children, must give her company to them. It is not for her to be ever craving after parties, or to feel it a hardship that she is denied them. The secret of her beneficent influence lies in a life of retirement. Hence the exhortation of the apostle in the text, to the matrons of his time, "To teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be devout, chaste, *keepers at home.*" We would not have a woman incarcerated in her own house, so as never to go abroad or enter into company. She who is devoted to her family needs occasional relaxation amid the pleasures of society, and especially the exhilarating engagements of public worship. There are some mothers who are such absolute slaves to their children that they scarcely ever stir from home even to the house of God. This is an error in one extreme, which might be avoided by method and dispatch. But there is an opposite

extreme in those who, even for the benefit of their children, will deny themselves neither the pleasure of social parties, nor the gratification of public meetings. The woman who is not prepared to make many sacrifices of this kind, for the sake of her children, and her home, and her husband, should never think of entering into wedded life.

Be ingenious, inventive, and studious, as to the best method of gaining the attention, and informing the minds of your children while young. There are too many who imagine that education, and especially religious education, consists in just hearing a chapter read, a catechism taught, or a hymn repeated, and that when this is done, all is done. The memory is the only faculty they cultivate—the intellect, affections, and conscience, are wholly neglected. A Christian mother should set herself to invent the best mode of gaining attention, and keeping it; and she should never weary it, or keep it so long that it wanders off itself. How ingenious was the device of Doddridge's mother in teaching him Scripture history, by the Dutch tiles of the chimney-place. The illustrated works which, in this fertile age, are perpetually issuing from the press, afford advantages for conveying both secular and sacred knowledge, of which bygone times knew nothing.

Be *familiar* in your religious instruction. The freedom of incidental conversation, rather than the formality of set and stated lessons—the introduction of religious topics in the common intercourse

of life, rather than the grave and forbidding annunciation of a change from secular to sacred subjects; and the habit of referring all things to God, and comparing the truths and maxims of the Bible with the events of every hour, rather than the mere lighting of a Sabbath lamp, and forcing all things out of their current, when the season of devotion returns—these are the means of opening the avenues to the youthful heart, and rendering religion, with its great Author, the object not of aversion or terror; not only of cold and distant homage, but of mingled reverence and love. On this point nothing can be more just and philosophic, any more than of higher obligation, than the direction once communicated from the source of infinite wisdom, "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up"—Deut. vi. 6–8.

Mothers, invested as you are with such an influence, often dwell upon your responsibility. With such a power vested in you by God, you are responsible to *your children themselves.* Every time their infant or adult voices repeat that word—"My mother," so sweet, so musical to your heart, they urge their claims upon your best and most devoted attention. This very sound in your ears should awaken the deepest emotions of your soul, and the most faithful admonitions of your conscience. You

are responsible to *your husbands.* They intrust the education of their children to you. They seem to say, "We will work for their support, and leave the early education of their minds to you. We will hereafter share all the obligation of instruction, and the care of their minds and characters with you, but at present, while they are so young, we devolve this duty upon you." You are responsible to *the church of God:* for family education is, or ought to be, in the families of the godly, the chief means of conversion. It is a fatal error for Christian parents to look to the ministers of religion for the conversion of their children. And, alas! it is the error of the day. The pulpit is looked to for those benefits which should flow from the parents' chair. Our churches, therefore, have weighty and righteous claims upon parents, and especially upon mothers. Nor does your responsibility stop here, for *society at large* looks to you for that beneficial influence which you are capable of exerting. I repeat, here, the well-known anecdote, and which I have given, I believe, in another work. Napoleon once asked Madam Campan what the French nation most needed, in order that her youth might be properly educated. Her reply was compressed in one word—"Mothers!" And it was a wise reply. Not the French nation only, *the world* needs them—Christian, intelligent, well-trained, devoted women, to whom the destinies of the rising generation may be safely intrusted. That woman on whose domestic hearth, and by whose judicious maternal

love, a family of industrious, godly, and public-spirited sons, or of modest, kind-hearted, prudent, and pious daughters, are trained for future life, is an ornament of her country, a benefactress to her species, and a blessing to posterity. I again and emphatically say, mothers understand, feel, and remember your responsibility.

But hitherto, it might be said, the sermon does not answer to its title, as intended for, and addressed to, *young* mothers. We will, therefore, now give it a special bearing upon their case. It has been my object, first of all, to set forth the subject of maternal duty and responsibility in its general aspect, apart from its relation to those to whom they are new, that they may see it in its widest and most comprehensive bearing, before they are reminded of its special bearing on their case. This, I am aware, will give the appearance of a repetition in the second part of the sermon, of some things that were advanced in the first. But such repetitions are sometimes beneficial. In addition, therefore, to what has been said on maternal duties in general, I shall now submit some other matters for *your* special consideration.

Too many, it is to be feared, enter upon this momentous business without consideration, and equally, as may be expected, without preparation or qualification. It is indeed a pitiable sight, to look into the state of some families, and behold the hapless condition of the poor children, who have the misfortune to be on the hands of a weak, foolish,

and incompetent woman. Perhaps, after all, this may be traced one step further back, and it might be found that *they* are incompetent, because *their* mothers were so before *them*. Thus the mischief perpetuates itself from generation to generation.

In all things it is of importance to *begin* well. The beginning usually determines the progress and the close. Errors, both in theory and practice, however long and pertinaciously persisted in, *may*, by intelligence, determination, and the blessing of God, be corrected. Reformation would be otherwise hopeless. But how much better and easier is it to avoid faults than to mend them. Many mothers have seen their mistakes when it was too late to correct them. Their children have grown up under the influence of a bad system of domestic government and maternal guidance, and have acquired a fixedness of bad habit which no subsequent wisdom, firmness, severity, or affection, could correct; and the parents have had to pour out bitter but unavailing regrets, that they had not begun life with those views of their duties with which they are now closing it. If a mother begins well, she is likely to continue well, and the same is true if she begin ill. *Her conduct toward her first child is likely, of course, to determine her conduct for all that follow.* How momentous is it, then, at this stage of her domestic history, to weigh well, and solemnly, and prayerfully, her responsible situation.

Indeed, it is quite clear that this subject ought *not* to be driven off by any wife till she becomes a

mother. The very prospect ought to lead to a due preparation for the expected new duties; for these commence with the earliest anticipations of sustaining the maternal character. It becomes us to prepare ourselves for any situation into which we have a confident expectation of soon entering. Forethought is given to man for the purpose of meeting with propriety the situation and its duties to which we are looking forward. The woman who never studies maternal responsibilities and duties, till she is called actually to sustain them, is not very likely to do herself much credit in that very important relationship. Instinct will teach the parent bird, or beast, or fish, or insect, all that is necessary for the well-being of their young; but not the *human* parent. Here, study, reflection, forethought, and determination, are indispensable. Unhappily a young wife, in prospect of giving birth to a child, is, in some cases, so bowed down with an unnecessary solicitude about her own safety; and, in others, so absorbed with the preparations which are made for the physical well-being and the elegant habiliments of the expected visitant, as to forget to prepare herself for those more important duties which devolve upon her, in relation to the mind, and heart, and conscience, of her child. A mother who wishes to fulfill her duties to her children, should take especial pains to educate herself for those momentous functions. She should read, to store her mind with knowledge; she should reflect, observe, and gain useful information from every quarter. Her prin-

ciples should be fixed, her plans laid, her purposes formed. She must cultivate all those habits and tempers which will fit her to teach and to govern. She must seek to acquire thoughtfulness, careful vigilance, quick observation, and discretion in various forms. Habits of activity and dispatch, order and regularity, are indispensable; so is the exercise of all the good and benevolent feelings. She must acquire the union of gentleness and firmness, patience and the entire command of temper. It is of immense importance, also, that she should have a correct knowledge of human nature, and the mechanism of the human heart. And, above all things let her remember, that piety is the vivifying spirit of all excellence, and example the most powerful means to enforce it. She should set out with the recollection never absent from her mind, that children have both eyes and ears for attention to a mother's conduct. Thus prepare yourself for your important functions, and also carry on the education of yourself, simultaneously with that of your children. There are few situations which more imperatively require preparation, and yet few that receive less.

So, again, when the maternal relationship is actually formed, there is, with some mothers, such a solicitude about the health and comfort of the babe, such an engrossing attention to all physical matters, united with such an exuberant delight in the child, as a child, such a mother's pride and joyousness in her boy—that the mind is diverted, by these circum

stances, from all those serious thoughts and solemn reflections which ought to be awakened by the consideration, that a rational, immortal, and lapsed creature, is committed to her charge, to be trained for both worlds. Thus the attention is absorbed month after month, while all this while the infant faculties are developing; judgment, will, affection, and conscience, at least, as to their capabilities, are opening, but neglected, and the natural bias to evil grows, unnoticed and unchecked. The very time when a judicious care over the formation of character could be most advantageously exerted, is suffered to pass by unimproved; passion is allowed to strengthen, unrestrained; self-will, to attain a resoluteness which stiffens into obstinacy; and the careless mother, who, at some time or other, intended to begin a system of moral training, but always saying, there is time enough yet, when the reason is a little more strengthened—wonders, when she *does* commence, that the subject of her discipline is so difficult to manage. And even then, she has so neglected to prepare herself for her duties, that she knows not how to set about them, or what, in fact, she has to do. An ill-managed child continues growing, not only in stature and in strength, but in his wayward disposition and obstinate self-will. The poor mother has no control; and, as to the father, he is too much taken up with the cares of business to aid his imperfect helpmate; and thus the scene is exhibited, described by Solomon, of "a child left to himself." Another and another are

added to this first-born, and are governed, mis-governed, or not governed at all; and there are soon seen, in rude, disobedient, and ill-natured children, perhaps, at length, profligate sons, and vain, silly daughters, the sad fruits of the want of maternal wisdom.

Young mothers, *begin* well then. Manage that first child with judgment; put forth all your skill, all your affection, all your diligence and devotedness, in training *him;* and the habit thus acquired, all will be comparatively easy with the others that follow. It is the novelty of that first child, the new affections which it calls forth, and the new interest that it makes, that are likely without care to throw you off your guard, and divert your attention from the great work of moral training. The first child makes the good or injudicious mother!

And as it is of immense consequence to begin your maternal excellence with the first child, so is it of equal importance to him, and to every one that is added, as I have already said, to begin early. "Education," it has been beautifully observed, "does not begin with the alphabet. It begins with a mother's look; with a father's nod of approbation, or sign of reproof; with a sister's gentle pressure of the hand, or a brother's noble act of forbearance; with a handful of flowers in green dells, or on hills, or in daisy meadows; with creeping ants, and almost imperceptible emmets; with humming bees, and glass bee-hives; with pleasant walks in shady lanes, and with thoughts directed in affection.

ate and kindly tones and words to nature, to beauty, to the practice of benevolence, and to the remembrance of Him who is the fountain of all good." Yes, and even before all this can be done, and lessons of instruction can be taught the child from flowers, and insects, and birds, the *moral* training can commence with what we have already mentioned—a mother's look, her nod of approbation, or sign of reproof. One of the greatest mistakes into which mothers fall, is that of supposing that the first two or three years of the child's life are unimportant as regards his training. The truth is, that as regards the formation of character, these are the most important of all. It has been truly said, that from the impressions made, the principles implanted, and the habits formed during these years, the child's character for time and eternity may take its complexion. It is perfectly clear that a child, before he can speak, is susceptible of moral training. The conscience, or moral sense may, by a judicious woman, be developed soon after, if not before the child has spent his first birthday. How early may he be made to distinguish between what his mother considers right and wrong, between what will please, and what will displease her. Why, the brute creatures will do this; and if *they* can be taught this, may not very young children? It is admitted that there is more of reason in many brutes than in very young children. Still, even young animals may be trained to know what they may, and what they may not do; and so may very

young children. We often hear mothers say, their children are too young to be taught obedience. The mother who acts upon this maxim, that children may have their own way for a certain number of years, or even months, will find, to her cost, that *that* lesson, at least, will not speedily be forgotten. Moral training may and should precede that which is intellectual. The cultivation of the affections and the conscience should be the commencement of education, and this will help all the rest.

There is in some women a timidity and distrust of their own capability, which paralyzes or prevents the endeavors which they could make if they would only believe in their own power. Every woman of good, plain understanding can do more than she imagines for the formation of her children's character. And what she is deficient in, let her supply by reading. No mother, however qualified, should neglect this.* Every one may learn something from others. Fearful and timid, and somewhat anxious mothers, be not afraid! Prayer will bring God's help and God's blessing.

Injudicious indulgence is the most common, as it is the most injurious danger into which a young mother can fall. Be kind; you ought to be. An

* I again recommend Mrs. Ellis's works—and to mothers, her book addressed to "The Mothers of England." Mrs. Sandford's work, already quoted, as well as recommended. "Woman's Mission," and Monod's book. And especially let young mothers take in that admirable periodical, "The British Mother's Magazine," edited by Mrs. Bakewell.

unloving, hard-hearted mother is a double libel upon her sex and her relationship. Love is her power, her instrument, her talisman. She can do nothing, worse than nothing, without it. But then *her* love must be like that of the Divine Parent, who said, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." Woman, can you say No to a child, when with winning smiles, or beseeching voice, or weeping eyes, he asks for what it is not good he should receive? Can you take from him what is likely to be injurious, and what will put him to pain to surrender? Can you correct him for his faults when your heart rises up in opposition to your judgment? Can you put him from your arms, at a proper season for so doing, when he clings to your neck and cries to remain? Can you exact obedience in, to him a difficult, but to you, a necessary duty? Woman, I ask you can you stand out against a child's tears, resolute in purpose, unyielding in demand, and first conquer your own heart, so stoutly resisting you in order to conquer his? Or do you allow yourself to be subdued to put an end to the contest, and by soothing his sufferings foster the temper which ought to be eradicated at any pains and any cost? She who can not answer all this in the affirmative is not fit to be a mother. There must be discipline in a family. The parent *must* be obeyed. Give up this, and you train your children for evil and not for good. Here, again, I say begin early. Put on the soft and easy yoke early. The horse is broken in while a colt. Wild beasts are tamed while yet

they are young. Both the human species and animals soon grow beyond the power of discipline.

A young mother is apt to devolve too much of the care and early training of her children upon servants. Much of what may be called the drudgery of managing children must, of necessity, be remitted to them; but a wise woman will have her children as much with her as possible. Next to mothers, our nurse-maids are the most influential class of the community, as regards young children. They and nursery governesses are, to a great extent, the educators of the community. These, when carrying the children in their arms, or leading them out for air and exercise, or attending upon them in the nursery, or dressing or undressing them, or, indeed, however they may be employed for them, are forming them to good or evil habits. If multitudes are spoiled by mothers, multitudes more are spoiled by servants; and some of the latter class have undone all the good the former have done. Of what importance is it, then, that you should be careful as to the persons you admit to your families in this capacity, to whom to intrust your children's minds, and hearts, and consciences; for, depend upon it, they have the care of those, as well as of their bodies.

Need I say to you, that all you do in training up your children in the way they should go, should bear directly or indirectly on their eternal welfare; and if I seem to advert to this subject with a frequency that looks like tautology, let its tremendous importance, and its too frequent and too great neg-

lect, be my apology. You will not overlook, as we have already remarked, the intellectual training of your children's minds, but their moral and religious education will, I hope, be with you the chief object of solicitude. Viewing your children as immortal beings destined to eternity, and capable of the enjoyments of heaven, you will labor, even from infancy, to imbue their minds with religious ideas. It is immortality which rescues from littleness and insignificance all that it appertains to, and hence arises in no inconsiderable degree the exalted honor of a mother. "She has given birth, by the sovereign ordination of the Almighty, not to a being of a mere momentary existence, whose life will perish like that of the beast of the field, but to an immortal! Her sucking infant, feeble and helpless as it may appear, possesses within its bosom a rational soul, an intellectual power, a spirit which all-devouring time can not destroy; which can never die, but which will outlive the splendors of the glorious sun, and the burning brilliancy of all the material part of heaven. Throughout the infinite ages of eternity, when all these shall have served their purpose and answered the beneficent end of their creation, and shall have been blotted out from their position in the immense regions of space, the soul of the humblest child will shine and improve before the eternal throne, being filled with holy delight and divine love, and ever active in the praises of its blessed Creator." Mothers, such is your dignity--such your exalted honors. Feel and value your

rich distinction in being called to educate the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty, and preparing the holy family who are to dwell in those many mansions of his Father's house, which the Lord Jesus is gone to prepare.

Give yourselves up to this glorious work. But be judicious in all you do, lest you produce a prejudice against, instead of a prepossession on behalf of, true religion. Let your warmest affection, your greatest cheerfulness, your most engaging smiles be put on when you teach religion to your children. Approach as near as possible to a seraph form. Be *you* religion in all its beauty, loveliness, sanctity, and ineffable sweetness. Let them *see* it in your character as well as hear it from your lips. And especially be careful not to enforce as a task what should be proposed as an object of hope and a source of delight. Let them see in you, that piety, if in one respect it is a straight and narrow path, is in another a way of pleasantness and a path of peace. Do not inflict upon them as a punishment for offenses the learning of Scripture and of hymns; and thus convert religion, which is the foretaste of heaven, into a penance which shall be to them like being tormented before their time. Especially do not make the Sabbath a day of gloom instead of gladness, by such an accumulation of services as shall cause the day of rest to be more physically irksome than the common labors of the week.

And can it be necessary, after what I have said in a former part of this sermon, to admonish you

again to pray for and with your children. How have a mother's prayers been blessed to her children. John Randolph, a distinguished American statesman, who had been much exposed to the seductions of infidelity in the society into which he had been thrown by his position, thus accounted to a gentleman, with whom he was conversing, for his preservation: "I believe I should have been swept away by the flood of French infidelity, if it had not been for one thing—the remembrance of the time, when my sainted mother used to make me kneel by her side, taking my little hands folded in hers, and cause me to repeat the Lord's prayer."

"On the east end of Long Island, in one of the most secluded spots in this country (America), more than thirty years ago, a mother, whose rare intellectual and moral endowments were known to but few, made this simple record: 'This morning I rose very early to pray for my children; and especially that my sons may be ministers and missionaries of Jesus Christ.'

"A number of years after, a friend, who was present, thus describes this mother's dying hour: 'Owing to extreme weakness, her mind wandered, and her conversation was broken; but as she entered the valley of the shadow of death, her soul lighted up and gilded its darkness. She made a feeling and most appropriate prayer, and told her husband that her views and anticipations had been such, that she could scarcely sustain them; and that if they had been increased she should have been

overwhelmed; that her Saviour had blessed her with constant peace, and that, through all her sickness, she had never prayed for life. She dedicated her five sons to God as ministers and missionaries of Jesus Christ, and said that her greatest desire was, that her children might be trained up for God.

"'She spoke with joy of the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, and of the glorious day now ushering in. She attempted to speak to her children, but was so exhausted, and their cries and sobs were such, that she could say but little. Her husband then made a prayer, in which he gave her back to God, and dedicated all they held in common, to him. She then fell into a sweet sleep, from which she awoke in heaven.'

"The prayers of this mother have been answered. All her eight children have been 'trained up for God.' Her five sons are all 'ministers and missionaries of Jesus Christ:' and the late Rev. George Beecher is the first of her offspring whom she has welcomed to heaven." And one of her daughters is the lady already alluded to in this discourse, who has obtained a world-wide fame by her elegant, benevolent, and pathetic story against slavery. In that lady and her work, as well as in her able and learned brothers, we see the fruit of a mother's prayers.

Take with you the following maxims, as summing up all that has been said:

Though a child's character is not entirely created by the circumstances in which he is placed, espe-

cially as regards his mother, it is powerfully influenced by them.

Education is designed to form character, and not merely to communicate instruction. Agesilaus, king of Sparta, when asked what it was in which youth ought principally to be instructed, replied, "In that which they have most need to practice when men."

Obedience is the first thing a mother has to teach; first, both in order and time, and the foundation of all the rest. Obedience must first be taught as a habit, and soon after inculcated as a *duty*.

A mother should assiduously cultivate the spirit of curiosity in a child, and, instead of always calling him to learn, should prompt his desire to be informed.

Young children must be sometimes contradicted in their wishes—but never merely for the purpose of teaching them submission, by taking from them some thing they are pleased with.

Habits of employment, and a love of *useful* employment, should be taught to children; they are not so mischievous, for the mere love of mischief, as they are supposed to be. If they destroy articles, it is sometimes for the purpose of investigation, and, oftener still, for want of proper employment, which ought to be furnished to them. In very early childhood, a love of industry and honest independence may be instilled into a child, by teaching him that it is honorable to be usefully employed. One little child may feel the pleasure and practice

the duty of benevolence, by doing something for the comfort of a tender babe still more helpless than itself.

It is of the first importance for a mother to establish in the mind of her child, an entire confidence in herself—in her wisdom, kindness, truth, and irresistible authority.

Truth, sincerity, candor, and ingenuousness are cardinal virtues to be taught to children. Simplicity is the beauty of a child's character; and he should be taught from the beginning to act upon principle, and not for the sake of being well thought of or rewarded.

Domestic affections should be most assiduously cultivated. When the second baby is born, the first child should, if old enough to understand the matter, be congratulated, and taught to regard it as an acquisition by which his happiness is to be increased, and in whose welfare he is to take an interest, in conjunction with his parents. The child who is taught affectionate obedience to parents, and justice and kindness toward his little equals round the domestic hearth, is being trained to fill with propriety the station and relations of future life.

Out of the babe grows the child; from the child, the youth; from the youth, the man; and from the man, the immortal—and that immortal will be an heir of glory or a child of perdition. Let this be remembered from the beginning, and ever acted upon.

Discipline in a family is what the public admin-

istration of justice is to a state; where it is wanting, there may be very good laws, but they will remain a dead letter, and the reign of crime and confusion be the certain consequence.

Religion should not be regarded as one science among many, the inculcation of which is a part of good education, but it must be the vital principle diffusing itself through all instruction, all rules, all authority, all discipline, all example. At what age is it proper, it may be asked, to begin teaching children religion? Their father and mother are, if true and consistent Christians, religion embodied and alive. And as soon as they begin to know their parents, they begin to know something about religion. A very young child is quite aware that his parents speak to ONE whom they do not see, and inquiring thoughts are awakened in his mind, before he can express them in words.*

And now, then, to sum up all, consider a mother's charge—an immortal creature; a mother's duty—to train him up for God, heaven, and eternity; a mother's dignity—to educate the family of the Almighty Creator of the universe; a mother's diffi-

* Some of these maxims are taken from a work of the late Mrs. Copley, published by the Tract Society, and entitled, "The Young Mother; or, Affectionate Advice to an Unmarried Daughter." A work which is most earnestly recommended to all young mothers, or who have the prospect of becoming such, as containing more sound, practical, and valuable advice on the physical, intellectual, and moral training of *young* children, than any book I am acquainted with.

culty—to train a fallen, sinful creature to holiness and virtue; a mother's privilege—the promise of Divine grace to assist her in her momentous duties; a mother's relief—to bear the burden of her cares to God in prayer; and a mother's hope—to meet her child in glory everlasting, and spend eternal ages of delight with him before the throne of God and the Lamb.

But are *mothers* only to engage in this work of educating their children for God? No. Fathers, I speak to you, for the Bible speaks to you: "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." I have addressed this sermon to your wives, because on them first devolves the duty of training the infant mind; not, however, to exonerate you from, but to engage them in this blessed work, and prepare the children for your hands. Not that they will ever, or should ever, give up their assiduities or withdraw their influence. No. A mother's power is, perhaps, as great when judiciously exerted over the adult, as over the infant child. But you, when the children are growing up, must join your solici tude and labors with hers. They are *your* children as well as hers. God will require their souls at your hands as well as hers. Are *you* exercising your authority, giving your instructions, pouring out your prayers, affording your example, for the salvation of your children? Is it your wish, your ambition, your endeavor, your supplication, that they may be religious men, or only rich ones?

Are you pouring your influence into the same channel as your holy wife? Are you helping or hindering her in her pious solicitude for the spiritual and eternal welfare of your joint offspring? Happy, happy couple! where there is sympathy of feeling, and similarity of sentiment in the most momentous concern that can engage the attention of man, of angels, or of God—religion. Where the husband and the wife are of one mind and one heart, not only in reference to themselves, but in regard also to their children, and both are engaged in training them up for everlasting glory; I can liken such a couple, in their benevolent efforts for their children's welfare, only to the two angels who were sent down from heaven to the rescue of Lot, and who, with holy and beneficent violence, took him by the hand to pluck him from the burning city, and conducted him to the place of safety prepared by the mercy of Almighty God.

APPENDIX.

SINCE this sermon was composed and partly printed, I have received the following letter:

"DEAR MR. JAMES—In your next sermon to Young Women, will you kindly give some advice to *common-place mothers*, who, not gifted with extraordinary affection, or extraordinary patience, are apt to be sadly worried with the incessant and multifarious claims of a *large little* family; especially where a limited income imposes unremitting toil to arrange for ordinary domestic comfort; and the numerous inmates of a small house almost preclude the refreshment of solitary closet intercourse with that Heavenly Father who rewardeth openly. As a class, we would gladly be instructed how to avoid, or, at least, to surmount the impatience and irritation so frequently engendered by the perplexities of the nursery and the school-room; the hasty speech, the angry action, which must be not only a hindrance to maternal influence, but perhaps even a hindrance to the efficacy of a mother's prayers.

"Excuse the liberty I take in thus writing to you, and with many thanks for your past valuable hints,

"Believe me, dear sir, yours very respectfully,

"A COMMON-PLACE MOTHER."

November, 1852.

This letter claims and awakens my tenderest sympathy for the class of mothers to whom it appertains; I mean women without the advantages of wealth, the accommodations of a nursery, and the help of servants to lighten the load of maternal cares, and to assist in the performance of maternal duties; women who must ever be in the midst of the perpetually-recurring trials of temper to which the

circumstances of a large little family must ever expose them; and who may fancy themselves, as to intellectual and other qualifications, only "Common-place mothers." Let such women not despond as if they were but slenderly fitted for their duties. The writer of the letter above given, gives full evidence that *she* is not disqualified for a mother's functions, so far as mental ability is concerned; but perhaps she, and others in her situation, may have something yet to learn and acquire as to temper and manner. It is evident she is in danger in these respects. The waywardness and freaks of unamiable disposition in her children produce petulance and irritability, and lead, perhaps, too often, on her part, to unseemly anger. A scold, a slap, or a shake, sometimes take the place of a mild but firm expostulation, and calm correction. To her, and to all in her situation, we say, what you need, and what you must put forth all your constant and determined effort, and wrestling supplication with God, to obtain, is the complete subjugation of your temper. You *must* bring this under control. You must acquire forbearance, patience, and a calm serenity. It will cost you much trouble and much prayer to attain it; but God's grace will be sufficient for you. I do not, of course, counsel you to seek after that apathetic, easy indifference which lets the children take their own course, and for the sake of a little ease throws up the reins of discipline. Still a mother must often have eyes, and not see; ears, and not hear. A fussing, fidgety notice of every little thing that goes wrong in the temper of all the children, will keep her in perpetual misery. To all, then, who are in the situation of "The Common-place Mother," I again and again, with all possible emphasis, say, subdue your irritability, and acquire a calm, patient, forbearing, loving, and serene mind. God will help you if you seek it You must not think such a frame of mind unattainable, nor allow your provocations and temptations to be an apology for your little sallies of bad temper.

The misfortune, perhaps, in the case of such mothers is, that they did not *begin* well. The first child was not well managed. Bad habits crept on, and now, with the family increased, it is difficult to break them. I have known even large, very large little families, where, by good temper, patience, and kindness, mixed with firmness, on the part of the mother, aided by a wise, kind, firm father, and where there were few domestic accommodations, the children were all well-managed, and the parents happy.

It would greatly comfort, help, and encourage these mothers, if, where such institutions were formed, they attended the meetings of Mothers' Societies. There is a very well-conducted one, which assembles every fortnight in the class-room of Carr's Lane Chapel, and I recommend my unknown correspondent, and others of her class, to join the society. They need encouragement, and at such meetings they find it.

As regards what is said about the opportunity for prayer, I can hardly admit a crowded house to be an excuse for the neglect of this. Every mother has her own chamber at command, a little sanctuary to which, when infant voices are hushed in sleep, she can repair, and pour out her heart to God for her children, and breathe over some of them, slumbering, perhaps, on the bed at which she kneels, a mother's prayers. Besides, how much of prayer, silent and ejaculatory, yet sincere, fervent, and believing, may be presented to God, without the formalities of devotion, or the retirement of the closet.

I again say, let no mother despair of herself because she does not possess high intellectual qualifications; the more of these there are, of course the better; but a temper under control—a patient, loving, forbearing disposition—a mild firmness—a gentle, but constant maintenance of parental authority—a judicious administration of rewards and correction, will enable any woman to fill her place with efficiency, though she may think herself to be "A Common-place Mother."

Solomon's Description of a Good Wife.

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies."—PROVERBS xxxi 10.

If any one should desire a book which combines grandeur of subject with beauty of expression; the sublimest theology with the soundest morality; the widest variety of topic, with an obvious unity of design; the most ancient history, with the most fascinating poetry; the profoundest philosophy, with the plainest maxims of human conduct; pathetic narratives, with picturesque descriptions of character; in short, a book which shall as truly gratify the taste by the elegance of its composition, as it shall sanctify the heart by the purity of its doctrines; and thus, while it opens the glories of heaven, and prepares the soul for possessing and enjoying them, shall furnish a source of never-failing pleasure upon earth—I say, if such a book *be* sought for, it can be found in the Bible, and *only* in the Bible. This precious volume more than answers the description just given. Where, in all the range of inspired or uninspired literature, can be found a delineation of female excellence, I will

not say equal to, but worthy to be compared with, that which forms the subject of the present discourse?

We have here a picture, of which it is difficult to say which is the most striking, the correctness of the drawing, or the richness of the coloring. Both display a master's hand, and though delineated three thousand years ago, it is still true to nature, when we have removed some of the effects of time, retouched some of the lines that have been clouded and obscured by length of years, and thrown in a few explanatory additions, to adapt it to modern habits. It is impossible to look at it without admiration and delight. It adds to the interest, to know that it is the production of a female artist. It is the description of a good wife, drawn by the hand of a mother, for the guidance of her son in the selection of a companion for life. They are "the words of King Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him." Who this man was is a matter of uncertainty. It was not Solomon, as some have supposed. The original Hebrew has many Chaldaisms, which are found in no other part of the book of Proverbs, and which afford a cogent argument that it was written by another hand, and perhaps after the captivity. The whole passage is written with great art, being a kind of poem, containing twenty-two verses, of which each in succession, like some of tne Psalms, begins with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Whoever Lemuel might have been, he had the privilege of a most eminent mother. "The admonitory verses with which the

chapter commences, composed by this distinguished woman for her son, when in the flower of youth and high expectation, are an inimitable production, as well in respect to their actual materials, as the delicacy with which they are selected. Instead of attempting to lay down rules concerning matters of state and political government, the illustrious writer confines herself, with the nicest and most becoming art, to a recommendation of the gentler virtues of temperance, benevolence, and mercy, and to a minute and unparalleled delineation of the female character, which might bid fairest to promote the happiness of her son in connubial life." What a pattern of maternal excellence is this mother of King Lemuel, and we may well imagine, that in this inimitable portrait she drew her own likeness. What sons we should see, if all were blessed with such mothers as she was!

In taking up this delineation, we shall consider FIRST, the inquiry which introduces it. "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies." This interrogation implies the rarity and the worth of the object sought. The question might have been more forcible in those times than in ours, for such a blessing might have been, and no doubt was, more scarce than it is now. True it is, the picture is so admirable, that even now a *perfect* resemblance is not to be found everywhere. Yet, if extraordinary excellence is not often found, happily that which is far above mediocrity is by no means rare. And why should there not be in every

female bosom an intense desire to rise to a *perfect* conformity to this beautiful pattern? How much more to be valued by her happy possessor is this, than all the jewels with which so many women are fond of being decked, or than the largest and the purest diamond in the mines of the east!

We proceed, SECONDLY, to consider the exquisite delineation of "the virtuous woman" now before us. But really I feel as if to touch it were to spoil it, and as though comments were almost like painting the tulip, perfuming the rose, or attempting to add brilliancy to the sun.

Instead of following the order of the verses, and adopting the regular expository method, I shall give a formal arrangement, for the completion of which, in something like symmetrical relation of parts, I shall dislocate the verses and place them under separate heads and titles. The authoress reserves *piety* for the climax, or culminating point of her description, and winds up the whole thus: "Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised." I shall make this our *starting*-point. We would remark, that the family to which the matron here described is supposed to belong is one in good circumstances, to the prosperity of which her own conduct and wise management materially contribute. We shall consider—

I. Her *piety*, as set forth in the verses just quote[illegible] the essence of true religion is compri[illegible]se—"*The fear of the Lord*:"

which means the cultivation and exercise of *all* right and holy dispositions toward God. Yes, *this* is religion, to have the heart right toward God. And we hold that this is not merely the gilded ornament that towers upward to heaven, and crowns and beautifies the building at the apex, though it is all this; but it is more than this, for it is the base of the whole structure, and supports the noble pyramid of its varied excellences. It is this which makes them strong and stable, and insures at once their proportions and their perpetuity. True piety, instead of setting aside a single female excellence, clothes them all with a Divine sanction, harmonizes the demands of God with the claims of man, converts the ordinary duties of domestic life into a means of preparation for that glorious world where the social ties no longer exist, and softens the cares, anxieties and sorrows, with which woman's lot in this world is but too often sadly oppressed. Whatever *else* a woman may be, without this she is lamentably deficient. "Favor," or as the word signifies, *gracefulness*, "is deceitful, and beauty *is* vain." The face of a beautiful woman *ought* to be an index of the mind; and when all is fair without, as it is said of the king's daughter in the Psalm, all should be glorious within. Never does an ill-furnished mind and an ill-favored heart appear more revolting than when seen united, and in contrast, with personal attractions. And yet how often dc elegance of manners, and loveliness of person, conceal dispositions which are in perfect contrast with

them, and bitterly disappoint the man who has been captivated by them, and who in his choice of a wife has been led by no other considerations than mere personal charms. "Let beauty have its due praise, and suppose what you will of it—suppose all that the poets say of it to be true, still the text tells you it is *vain*, it is in its nature transient, fleeting, perishing; it is the flower of the spring which must fade in autumn; and when the blossom falls, if no fruit succeeds, of what value, I pray, is the tree? The grave is already opening for the most elegant person that moves, and the worms are waiting to feed on the fairest face that is beholden." But religion is an excellance and a beauty which time can not corrode, old age wrinkle, disease spoil, nor death destroy; but which, after living and thriving amid all other decays in this world, shall flourish in the next in all the vigor of immortal youth.

II. We next note here *conjugal excellence.*

"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life."—11, 12.

Those are good really, who are good relatively; and especially in wedded life. Confidence between man and wife is the basis of domestic happiness. There can not possibly be happiness where this is wanting. Suspicion and jealousy must drive felicity out of doors. In regard to the "virtuous woman," her husband trusts her *chastity*. Her fidelity [illegible] ble as the covenant of the Most

High, and her purity unsullied as the light of heaven. What a torment is jealousy in the bosom of husband or wife! wormwood and gall are sweet to it. He trusts her *fidelity* in the management of his affairs, and knows that all his domestic interests are safe in her hands. With such a manager at home, he can go without anxiety to his daily business—travel to distant places—or remain, when necessary, by ever so long an absence, away from home. He shall have "no need of spoil:" shall have no necessity, through an improvident and unthrifty wife, for spoiling others of their property. "He need not," says Matthew Henry, "be griping and scraping abroad, as those must be, whose wives are proud and wasteful at home." She manages his affairs, so that he is always beforehand, and has such plenty of his own, that he is in no temptation to prey upon his neighbors. He thinks himself so happy in her, that he envies not those who have most of the wealth of this world; he needs it not—he has enough in having such a wife. Happy the couple that have such satisfaction as this in each other! It is too well known to be denied, that if many husbands make their wives wretched by their unkindness, many wives make their husbands poor by unthriftiness. Many a man has been tempted to cheat his creditors through the improvidence, bad management, and extravagance of his wife. The "virtuous woman" will study to do her husband good, and to avoid doing him evil, all the days of her life. She will

be inventive, ingenious, and laborious to promote his comfort, his health, and his interests, will smoothen by her sweet words his brow, when wrinkled with care; hush the sigh that misfortune extorts from his bosom; will answer with gentleness the sharp words that in moments of irritation drop from his lips—and will do all this, not by fits and starts in genial moods, but continually.

But this is not all; for, on looking onward in the chapter, we find another reference to her conduct and influence as a wife. "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land."—23. By the gates are meant the place of magisterial assembly and business, which, in ancient times, was in apartments over the gates of the city. In these public convocations, a good wife will make her husband known, and add to his public reputation in various ways. Her prudent conduct in her domestic arrangements will enable him to leave home with confidence to attend to public business. She is not so engrossing of his company as to prevent his becoming a public benefactor and blessing. By the happiness which she imparts to him at their own fireside, she sends him abroad, not with a downcast look, as if he had left a heavy trouble at home, or carried it everywhere with him; but with a cheerful countenance, as though he had just come from the scene and seat of his chief earthly bliss. By her proper care of his personal appearance, in the elegance and neatness of his apparel, and which, in ancient times, was the

work of her hands; and especially by the force of her holy example sustaining and encouraging his excellence, she raises the honor and increases the respect of her husband. He is better known and more esteemed as the husband of such a wife. Can a woman rise to higher honors than this—to be so excellent and estimable as to augment the public respectability of her husband? Still, let husbands take care that they do not shine only in borrowed splendor, and stand indebted for *all* their esteem to their wives. Let them so act, and be such men, that the honor they receive on account of their wives be only an addition to the greater honor that belongs to themselves. It is the comfort and glory of a man, to be *better* known and *more* respected, on account of his wife; but it is to his discredit to be known and respected *only* by his wife. It is a poor, mean affair for a man to go through society with no better patent than his wife's excellence. Such a woman must feel herself, though in one sense exalted, in another degraded, by being the wife of a man who has no public honor but what he derives from her. It *must* bring misery when the husband finds himself ever in a total eclipse of his wife; except, indeed, he be too stupid to feel it. Alas for the wife of such a man! Let this induce care and caution in the formation of the marriage-union. Unequal matches are not often happy ones.

III. Observe, now, her *industry* as a woman.

"She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh will

ingly with her hands. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff"—13, 19.

This is in allusion to the customs of the times, and is a description of personal habits of manual labor and energetic employment. All textures of wool and flax, cotton and silk, were, before the invention of machinery, woven out of thread and yarn, spun by the hand, through the instrumentality of the distaff and the spindle. Nor was this occupation confined exclusively to the laboring classes; for queens, princesses, and peeresses disdained not to be thus employed, amid the more courtly occupations of their rank.*

It is well worthy of attention, that out of the twenty-two verses of this elegant poem, eleven are taken up in setting forth the virtue and practice of

* Many of the classic authors refer to this. Homer, both in his *Iliad* and his *Odyssey*, alludes to it. So does Virgil; and Ovid advises maidens, if they would have the favor of Minerva, to learn to use the distaff, to card, and to spin. Lucretia was found spinning with her maids, when her husband visited her from the camp. The wool spun by Tarquin's wife with the distaff and spindle, long remained in the temple. Alexander the Great is said to have shown to the Persian princesses his garments made by his mother Our English records of female royalty furnish similar proofs of hand-industry. The magnificent, far-famed tapestry of Bayeux was the work of William the First's queen. The messengers of Henry to Katherine of Arragon, announcing her divorce, found her with a skein of red silk round her neck, being at work with her maids. Beautiful memorials are still preserved of Queen Katherine Parr's manual skill.—*Bridges on the Proverbs.*

the matron's *industry*, in its various relations and duties. And her industry is represented as eminently utilitarian. Indolence is sometimes thought and said to be one of the failings to which women are exposed; especially in single, and more frequently in high life. It is censurable even there; how much more in the state of matrimony; and they who are given up to it as maidens, are in imminent peril of carrying the habit forward into the state of the wife, the mother, and the mistress. An indolent woman at the head of the domestic economy, must throw all into confusion. It is neither asked nor expected that her energies should be expended on works which belong to servants; but an active female, even where there are servants at command, might always find something to do without stepping out of her proper place. The mistress of an establishment, especially if she be also a wife and a mother, can never plead want of occupation as an excuse for personal laziness. What a sad example does such a woman set to her servants and her children! No vice is more contagious than this, nor is any example more likely to be imitated by those around.*

* Simonides, a Greek poet, who lived very early in Grecian history, was the author of the oldest satire extant. He employed his sarcastic powers on the female sex. He tells us that the gods formed the souls of women out of those seeds and principles which compose several kinds of animals and elements; and that their good and bad dispositions arise in them according as such and such seeds and principles predominate in their constitutions. The slut,

IV. We next notice her *thriftiness* as a wife and female head of a family.

"She considereth a field, and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard"—16. "She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant"—24. "She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night"—18.*

the scold, the sluggard, the cunning, the variable, the obsequious, the morose, the vain, the ill-favored, and the industrious, are all traced back to their original prototypes; and perhaps the ingenuity of my readers, without any help from me, will enable them to recognize what animals and elements most appropriately set forth these qualities of human character. "The tenth and last species," says the poet, "were made out of the bee; and happy is the man who gets such an one for his wife. She is altogether faultless and unblameable. Her family flourishes and improves by her good management. She loves her husband, and is beloved by him. She brings him a race of beautiful and virtuous children. She distinguishes herself among her sex. She is surrounded with graces. She never sits among the loose tribe of women, nor passes away her time with them in wanton discourses. She is full of virtue and prudence, and is the best wife that Jupiter can bestow on man."

"I shall conclude these iambics," says the writer in the *Spectator*, "with the motto of this paper, which is a fragment of the same author: 'A man can not possess any thing that is better than a good woman, or any thing worse than a bad one.'"—*Spectator*, vol. iii. 200.

* It may be doubted whether in the state of society to which this description belongs there were any manufacturers of household stuffs, but such as were thus produced in families, and the demand having no other source of supply,

From these verses it is apparent that in early times women were extensively employed even in buying and selling, in such matters as suited their sex; and did not withdraw their attention from other duties, in aiding their husbands to increase the wealth and comforts of their families. This manufactory in the house, this traffic with the merchants, this buying a piece of ground and planting a vineyard, sounds hardly feminine in our ears; but it gives us an insight into those times, and shows how little the tyranny of man over woman, which afterward prevailed in Eastern countries

stimulated domestic production to an extent of which we can hardly have any adequate conception. Many families would produce much more than they could consume, and, as there was always a demand and a profitable remuneration for such products, a thrifty housewife would be industrious herself, and keep all hands at work, especially at those articles, the fine linen and girdles, which were most in demand. The traveling merchants called at the homes of the people, bought up their articles, and then resold them. At the present day, we see offered for sale in Eastern towns, either at first or second-hand, the outer garments, spun and woven by the Arab females in their tents, the admired carpets made by the women of Persia, and even the rich embroideries and other elegant productions of the needle, which are prepared by the town ladies in their harems.—*Kitto's "Daily Bible Illustrations"* on this chapter. I can not lose this opportunity of recommending, in the strongest language and most emphatic manner I can command, this invaluable series of books. I believe, for the elucidation of the historic parts of Scripture, there is nothing comparable with them in the English or any other language.

as time rolled on, had yet been practiced. Woman is here seen as man's companion, counselor and helper, even to the making of provision for the support of the family. Modern customs render this to a considerable extent, unnecessary. Woman's place, ordinarily, is the parlor and the nursery, rather than the shop. Buying and selling are the business of the husband, and taking care of the family that of the wife; and the less, as a general rule, the latter has to do with the former the better. It is an indelible reproach to any man, to live in idleness upon the labors of his wife, and leave her to provide for the children also. A month's labor at the treadmill, or a month's penance on bread and water, would be a suitable regimen for such drones. Yet necessity dispenses with ordinary laws; and where there are no children to be provided for, or where their comfort and education can be attended to also, it is by no means an unseemly spectacle to witness a clever and devoted woman occasionally at the side of her husband in the scenes of his trade. This applies, of course, only to small concerns, for in large ones there is no need of it. No wife will feel herself degraded by such occupations. The grateful and affectionate smile of her husband, and the consciousness that she is lightening his cares and aiding him to support his family, will be an ample reward for her labor.*

* It is, however, a great unhappiness for the laboring classes of this and other manufacturing towns, that married

V. We notice, next, her *judgment and skill* in her *domestic arrangements.*

"She riseth, also, while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens"—15. "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness"—27. "Her candle goeth not out by night"—19. "She is like the merchants' ships: she bringeth her food from afar"—14. "She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet:" or, as it should be rendered, "in *double garments*"—21.

How many points there are here worthy of notice and imitation! She knows the value of time, and redeems it, and makes the day as long as she can by early rising. Nothing wastes time more than unnecessary slumbers. Sleep is a temporary death, and no more of it should be taken than prepares for a healthful resurrection in the morning. Even the rising of our Lord from the grave took place very early in the morning, as if, among the minor lessons he would teach us by the very circum

women, who are not only wives, but mothers, are so extensively employed in our manufactories. In some cases it may be necessary, and even beneficial; but, as a general practice it is fraught with much discomfort to the family. And, in order to render it unnecessary, let the husband be more industrious, more sober, more temperate in all things; and forego the earnings of his wife at the manufactory, that she may be looking after her children, and providing him with a clean, comfortable, and well-ordered home. This takes away one temptation to frequent the ale-house.

stances of that wondrous and glorious event, one is, that our own morning figure of the resurrection, in rising from our bed, should take place early. A slothful woman, who wastes the precious hours of prime in bed, is a sad example to her family. How can she teach the valuable habit of early rising to her children and servants; or, how can she "look well to the ways of her household, and give meat to her maidens," by setting in order her household affairs, if she leave not her downy pillow till the day is far spent? And then, it is said of the good wife, "her candle goeth not out by night." When the days are short and the nights long, she takes no advantage of this for the indulgence of sloth. Though early up to lengthen the day at that end, she is not in haste to retire to rest, and so shorten it at the other. Each hour has its work, and the work *of* the hour is done *in* the hour. The ways of her household are the constant matter of oversight and inspection. And such is the fruit of her good management, that when winter comes, her servants and children need not fear frost or snow, for, both inside and out, they are protected from the cold. How interesting a scene is it, on a bleak, cheerless day, when the east wind is piercing, and the sleet is driving before it, to see a large family, through the activity of an industrious and kind mother and mistress, all clad in warm garments. In a complete sense of "looking well to the ways of her household," it must include not only good housewifery, but a proper attention to their moral habits, their

religious instruction, attendance on the means of grace, giving them time for secret prayer and reading God's Word, the daily ordinance of family worship, the careful observance of the Sabbath, anxious watchfulness over their manners, habits, and connections; in short, considering servants, not as beasts of burden, not as mere mercenaries, but as a solemn and responsible trust for God and eternity. Who can have the claim to the title of *a virtuous woman*, who does not feel this weight of family responsibility?* And *what* a responsibility! Let every mistress read it, tremble and pray. We most urgently enjoin all the acquirements of good and clever housewifery, of frugality without stinginess, plenty without profusion, attention without slavery, order without fastidiousness, dispatch without hurry, and elegance without extravagance. "This bear in mind," said an accomplished writer, in giving his advice to his son, when he is directing him as to the choice of a wife, "that if she is not frugal, if she is not what is called a *good manager*, if she does not pique herself on her knowledge of family affairs, and laying out her money to the best advantage, let her be ever so sweetly tempered, gracefully made, or elegantly accomplished, she is no wife for a tradesman; and all these amiable talents will but open just so many ways to ruin. In short, remember your mother, who was so exquisitely versed in this art, that her dress, her table, and every other particular, appeared rather splendid

* Bridges.

than otherwise; and yet, good housewifery was the foundation of all; and her bills, to my certain knowledge, were a fourth less than most of her neighbors, who had hardly cleanliness to boast, in return for their awkward liberality." This is all true, and all good, as far as it goes. But then, it is not enough, for to this must be added all that moral and religious oversight and care, which Mr. Bridges, in the above quotation, has so justly included in it.

VI. I may introduce now her conduct as a *mother*.

"Her children arise up, and call her blessed"—28.

Happy the children of such a mother, who receive the lessons of wisdom taught them by her lips, as well as by the example of piety, prudence, and sobriety which she set them in her conduct. With their character formed under the plastic influence of her own, and the consciousness how much they owe to her influence, they rise up around her with feelings of gratitude and veneration; when surrounded with families of their own, they teach her grand-children to reverence her; and when she has descended to the tomb, they pour those blessings over her grave which they had during her life been accustomed to offer round her chair, or in their evening prayer for her welfare. Let it be the holy and honorable ambition of every mother to be crowned with the blessings of her children, which she that is foolish or sinful never can be. Let every mother seriously ponder what she would really wish her daughters to be; what by general cons[illegible] would be praised for being, and that

let her be herself. The mother should be as perfect a model as possible for her daughters to imitate.

In my last sermon I gave directions to *young* mothers in reference to the *early* training of their children; let me now give a few hints to those whose children are rising up around them, or have become young men and women. I say, then, be much at home yourselves, and that is the way, if your temper, spirit, and conduct be loving and agreeable, to keep *them* at home. Make them fond of your society, by causing them to feel that you are fond of theirs. Throw an air of cheerfulness over the circle. A mother's smile is the sunshine of the domestic group, in which all delight to bask. Be happy yourselves, and you will then make your children happy around you. And yet let it not be a cheerfulness that degenerates into levity. Nothing can be more unseemly than a frivolous mother, indulging in undignified mirth, or frothy, gossiping, or slanderous discourse, in the midst of grown-up sons and daughters. To be called a "rattle" is no commendation of a mother. Of all subjects on which a discreet mother will never joke with her children, love and courtship will be the last. A wise and good woman will avoid all trifling with matters of such delicacy and importance. To her sons she will exhibit in herself the model after which she would wish them to choose a wife; and to her daughters, the pattern she would wish them to copy, should they ever become wives and moth

ers themselves. There should be a high and dignified bearing, softened by the tenderest affection; and a kindness and affability uncorrupted by a low familiarity. Her authority should insure the prompt obedience of her children, whatever be their age, as her wisdom should attract their confidence, and her love their gratitude and affection. She must be thus their companion, counselor, and comforter, and by the frankness of her own disposition encourage theirs. They must be so treated as to be made to feel that they have no momentous secrets they could wish to conceal from her. And especially should she exhibit to them all the holiness, the meekness, the consistency, the beauty and attractiveness of true religion; the sanctifying, humbling, spiritualizing power of genuine godliness in prosperity, and all its Divine support and heavenly consolation in adversity, that they may be won by her example to piety, and thus rise up not only on earth, and in time, but in heaven, and through all eternity, to call her blessed.

VII. She is not destitute of *taste* and *elegance*.

"She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple"—22.

Though not addicted to the pride of dress, and the vanity of ornaments, she maintains, even by its external, conventional signs, her rank and station in society. Her wardrobe and her furniture are in keeping with her circumstances, her virtues, and her industry. And it is right they should be. No, my female friends, religion is not at war with

elegance and good taste. It is itself the "*beauty* of holiness," and the richest and purest moral taste. Neither despise nor idolize these matters. Be neither a sloven nor a dressed doll; neither the slave nor the cynic of fashion; neither excite disgust by your want of attention to little matters of order, becomingness, and ornament; nor court admiration by splendor and expensiveness. Be consistent in all your modes with your station. Affect not the pride of meanness any more than that of magnificence. And as to the elegant occupations for leisure hours of modern times, we refer you back to what, in former sermons, we have said on the subject of accomplishments.

VIII. Note her *prudence in speech.*

"She openeth her mouth in wisdom"—26.

She thinks before she speaks; and therefore neither introduces a bad subject, nor disgraces a good one by an improper manner of discoursing upon it. She has too just a sense of the value of the gift of speech, and too accurate an idea of the power of words for good or for evil, to employ them in idle gossip, petty scandal, or slanderous backbiting. She is neither too taciturn, knowing that speech is given to be employed; nor too talkative, equally knowing that "in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin"—Prov. x. 29. The apostle James saith: "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." This, perhaps, is still more true of a woman, inasmuch as she is thought to have a greater propensity to loquacity. The

gift of speech is never more adorned than when employed in the soft and gentle tones of woman's voice, uttering the words of wisdom and kindness; never more dissonant and repulsive than when her tongue is voluble in folly or falsehood, malice and passion. Have we not all known husbands, of whose time a large portion has been employed in explaining the mistakes, correcting the follies, healing the feuds, and repairing the mischiefs of wives who opened their mouths, but not in wisdom? While on the other hand, has not many an Abigail, by her discreet and timely interposition, and wise address, averted the storm that was gathering over the family from the churlish language of Nabal, her husband? Blessed is that woman who knows how to charm, to repose the troubled thoughts of an angry or a vexed husband—who can discern when to be silent, and when to speak; and how by the sweet harpings of her voice to lull his agitated mind, and drive the evil spirit out of his breast. Ah! it is at home that this wisdom of speech is most wanted. What stormy scenes sometimes arise from the absence of it, which drive peace from the family, and fill it with harsh discords and fearful strifes!

IX. Is *benevolence* no part of the spirit and conduct of the virtuous woman? Let the text reply.

"In her tongue is the law of kindness"—26. "She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy"—20.

Her kindness begins with thoughts, goes on to

words, and ends in works. In her heart, it is as a principle of charity; upon her tongue, as a law to dictate gentle, and soothing, and pleasing words. She speaks, and her expressions are as the droppings of the honeycomb, or the falling of the dew But her mercy is in her hand, as well as in her heart, and upon her lips. She does not merely *say* to the hungry and shivering, "Be ye warmed, and be ye filled," but she giveth them wherewith to satisfy their hunger and clothe their limbs. And her kindliness of disposition is the golden thread which runs through all her life, and binds up all her actions, not only into a womanly but saintly benevolence. Her spindle and distaff, so industriously employed, are worked not for herself alone, but for the poor and needy. She is not so taken up with those within the circle of her family, as to forget those that are without. Her benevolence is like a spring, which not only refreshes and fertilizes the spot where it gushes up and makes all verdant round its margin, but flows onward to carry its benefits to those at a distance. She adorneth herself with "silk and purple," and maketh "coverings of tapestry" for her own habitation, and clotheth her household in scarlet; but then, also, like Dorcas, she maketh garments for the poor. Oh, how beautifully does this feature of kindness come into the portrait; how does this diamond of mercy sparkle amid the other jewelry of this charming character. What a blank would the absence of it have made. How we should have turned away

not with admiration, but with disgust, from this industry, frugality, conjugal affection, good housewifery, maternal excellency, prudence, and elegance, if all these virtues had been exhibited in the iron setting of selfishness, instead of the gold of mercy. If this pattern-woman for all household virtues had been presented to us so swallowed up in her own well-provided-for family, as to care nothing for the starving and naked families around her; why, then, a dark shadow would have fallen upon this otherwise bright character, and its luminousness would have passed at once, if not into total, yet into partial eclipse. But it is not so. Mercy, like a mid-day sun, rises upon the scene, and sheds its luster upon all. Christian women, you, you, must be the brightest patterns of kindness and mercy which our selfish world contains, and add to temperance, patience, and godliness, Christian kindness and charity.

X. Such a character can not be unnoticed or unacknowledged; nor can such excellence pass through the world without admiration and commendation; and we now, therefore, note the *honor* and *esteem* with which she is treated.

"Strength and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come"—25. "Her husband also, and he praiseth her"—28. "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all"—29. "Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised"—30. "Give her of the fruits of her

nands, and let her own works praise her in the gates"—31.

She seeks not human applause, and therefore acts no theatrical part; nor for the sake of praise, affects display. Content with the love and esteem of her husband, the veneration and affection of her children, and the respect of her friends, she is not anxious to obtrude herself upon public attention, to shine in brilliant circles, or to have even her excellence made the subject of general commendation. Still unsought praise *will* be given her. Spontaneous tribute and free-will offerings of honor and respect *will* be paid her. Her husband will be the first to perceive, and the foremost to acknowledge her excellence. If a grateful man, he will make her sensible of his just appreciation of her excellences, not by mere fondling and caresses, but by respect for her judgment and character; by commending her to her children, and bidding them follow her example. Cases do sometimes occur of men so inferior to their wives, and so conscious of that inferiority, as to be jealous of their ascendency in the family, and to be envious of the talents and the virtues they can not imitate. A husband, blessed with such a woman as is described in this chapter, should not be backward, on suitable occasions, to let others know the estimate he forms of her character. True it is that a wise man will not be ever talking of his wife's excellences; but he will, at proper seasons, feel a pride and a pleasure in exalting her in public estimation, and the public

will not fail to give her the fruits of her doings. "Let every one," says Bishop Patrick, "extol her virtue. Let her not want the just commendation of her pious labors. But while some are magnified for the nobleness of their stock from whence they sprang, others for their fortune, others for their beauty, others for other things let the good deeds which she herself hath done be publicly praised in the greatest assemblies, where, if all men shall be silent, her own works will declare her excellent works." And to use the poetic language of another prelate, "The crown which her own hands have thus formed, shall be placed upon her head, as it were by general consent, even in this life; and her good deeds celebrated in public assemblies, shall diffuse an odor grateful as the smell of Eden, or as the cloud of frankincense ascending from the holy altar. When her task is ended, the answer of a good conscience, and the blessings of all around, sweeter than the sweetest music, shall chant her to her repose, till awakened on the great morning of the world, descending angels shall introduce this daughter of Jerusalem into the joy of her Lord."*

Such, then, is the character of the virtuous woman, as delineated by the mother of King Lemuel. By expanding the miniature as it was drawn by the pen of inspiration into a large and full-length picture, I have, perhaps, done injustice to the subject. If so, let those who are of this opinion perpetually and closely study the original as it is found in the

* Bishop Horne.

book of Proverbs. "There," says Matthew Henry, in his quaint style, "is shut up this looking-glass for ladies, which they are desired to open and dress themselves by; and if they do so, their adorning will be found to praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

If, however, a wife devoid of all that constitutes her real excellence, shall run counter to this beautiful picture—if instead of being the glory of her husband, she shall seek to rival him, and shall either attempt in the domestic firmament to be the greater light to rule the day, or to throw him into eclipse, before whom she should be content with partial obscuration; if instead of being content to be praised by him, and deeming his approving smile a worthier object of ambition, and a richer reward than the gaze of admiration and the language of flattery from strangers; if she be a wife who opposes wantonly his tastes, or neglects his comfort; who contemns his opinion, and contradicts him with asperity, and resents with unseemly heat his real or unintentional slights; who exhibits indolence but not industry in the management of his household, and either by slovenliness allows all things to sink into uncleanness and confusion, or by extravagance hastens on the approach of poverty and ruin; who neglects even her children, and causes them to rise up in grief and shame for their mother; who gives her maidens constant occasion for reproach and complaint, on account of her ill-temper and worse conduct; who is restless and uneasy at home, but

need of you, comforting the afflicted, forming or supporting charitable institutions, seconding a pious minister in his labors—in short, in every good work for which God appears to have expressly reserved your liberty. Or embrace, for you may, a yet vaster sphere. Embrace the world, if you will, provided it be in the spirit of charity. In fine, accomplish your mission so faithfully, that when the hour of your death shall arrive, all may rejoice in the happy isolation which permitted you thus to devote yourself; and that, amid the tender regrets which shall follow your mortal remains to the tomb, it may no longer be discerned, in the sacrifice which you have made, whether you were wife or sister, or aunt or mother, relative or stranger."

It can not fail, I think, to impress every reader of this beautiful description of the "virtuous woman," that the delineation includes chiefly the *active* virtues of the female character. It is the bustling, energetic, and prosperous female, surrounded by circumstances that call forth her industrious assiduities, invest her with power, and array her with public honor; rather than the quiet, gentle, and retired sufferer, struggling with adversity, or crushed by oppression, whose virtues consist of submission to the will of God; and patient, uncomplaining endurance of the wrongs of man, perhaps of her husband; and the brightness of whose character is heavenward, to be admired by God and angels, rather than earthward, to be seen and extolled by men. To the latter we would say, look up with

believing prayer to God, for the grace that is necessary to fill your dark sphere with the illumination of that holy virtue, which, with lunar radiance, shines brightest by night. Little of the glory of the character which we have been describing may fall upon you in those secluded shades amid which you are called to dwell. In solitude, with no eye to pity, no voice to soothe, no hand to help, you may be called to drink the cup of sorrow. Well, drink it, as did the greatest and holiest sufferer that ever passed through our vale of tears, saying, "The cup which my Father giveth me to drink, shall I not drink it?" and the time will come, when he who loveth you better than you love yourself, shall wipe away all tears from your eyes. To those who, by divine grace, are copying the pattern set before them in this discourse, and are in circumstances to do so, I would say, Over all these fine traits of active, energetic character, cast the vail of gentleness, modesty, and humility. Let the passive virtues of your sex blend with, and soften the active ones. Be sure to single out that lovely feature, "*the law of kindness is on her tongue.*" With all this masculine energy in womanly conduct, unite feminine tenderness and softness. Whatever else in charac ter you may be, still be a woman, with all a woman's grace and loveliness; and while, as a wife, a mother, and a mistress, you wield the authority, and exert the influence which belongs to you, remember still, there is one in the family—I mean your husband—whose authority is still higher than your own, and

that it is at once your duty, and will be for your happiness, meekly and gracefully, though not abjectly and crouchingly, to bow to him.

Young women, I beseech you to make yourselves familiar with this exquisite passage of Holy Writ. It must be a *study* for you. There is much, very much, to be learned from it. You will here see that piety is the broadest and most solid basis of all female excellence, and so far from interfering with temporal duties, will, wherever it is genuine, quicken attention to them. Godliness is profitable for all things, and helps the pursuit of all that is lawful. There is not a good quality of character, nor a single earthly interest, which it will not effectually promote. Do not allow yourselves to be imposed upon by the misrepresentations of its enemies, who would persuade you, if they could, that piety is unfriendly to general character, and inimical to personal happiness; that it enjoins duties unfriendly, and forbids pleasures essential to youthful enjoyment. Upon examination, however, it will be found that this objection to it, like all others, is founded upon air. Is there a virtue or a practice which can adorn or bless humanity, which it does not enjoin? And as to its more solemn, and what some would consider its more sorrowful duties—I mean repentance—I would remind you that these are not the only exercises of true religion; for there is the joy unspeakable of faith, as well as the grief of contrition; and that the latter leads on to the former, just as the shower in the sultry heat

of summer portends and produces a cooler atmosphere. Religion forbids no pleasures, but such as are injurious to the soul, and substitutes the substance of happiness for its shadows. It resembles a fine country in spring, where the hedges bloom, and every thorn produces a flower.

Perhaps it will be thought by some it is a pity that a delineation of the virtuous *man*, equally minute, comprehensive, and impressive, had not been drawn by the same hand which gave us this picture of female excellence. In default of this, however, it is observable how much of what is here said may be copied into the character and conduct of the other sex. There is scarcely a rule of conduct here presented, which may not, with a little change, be observed by the husband, the father, and the master. This virtuous woman's fidelity to her husband, personal industry, good management, and diligence in her family, consideration for the comfort and necessities of others, kindness of speech and pity for the poor, courtesy to all, and especially her sincere and practical piety, belong to her husband, and are required of him, as well as of herself. These virtues are appropriate to both sexes. They are the general principles of excellence, though adapted here to the female sex. And therefore we recommend husbands to study this portraiture, not only to see what their wives should be, but what is required of themselves also.

But who [illegible] is sufficient for these things? [illegible] whose sufficiency is of

God; and He, to the docile and humble petitioners at the footstool of His grace, will ever bestow that gracious aid which is equal to the exigency of every case. In reminding you of your various duties, and calling upon you to construct a character which, after exhibiting to the admiration of every beholder on earth its graceful proportions, shall endure with unfading beauty and undiminished grandeur through eternity; I would also remind you of your own indecision, feebleness of purpose, exposure to temptation, and consequent necessity of divine assistance. To obtain this help you must have faith in Christ, the source of all spiritual efficacy, and earnest prayer to God, and none shall seek this grace in vain.

I THUS close a series of discourses, on which, in consequence of the rarity of the effort and the delicacy of the subject, I entered, not indeed without some hope, but with much fear and trembling. So far as the pleasure of my own mind in preparing and preaching these sermons, and the monthly attendance upon their delivery from the pulpit, are concerned, my expectations have been more than realized. In laying down rules, pointing out defects, and the occasional comparison of the excellences and the faults of the sexes, I have had a somewhat difficult task to perform, and in the performance of which I can scarcely presume to hope I have given satisfaction to all parties. I must be contented, and it is no small matter to be so, with the conviction that I have endeavored to hold the balance with a

steady and impartial hand; and in this I have satisfied my own conscience. I have praised, where praise was called for, and that was very often, but my commendation has not degenerated into flattery; and I have blamed, when blame was just, but it has been without acrimony. My object has been to promote the happiness of both sexes, by improving the character of that one on which so much of the happiness of both depends; and to advance the welfare of society by purifying its earthly source. How far I have succeeded it is impossible I should ever know, and in the absence of certainty must be comforted with the pleasures of hope.

I have looked upon woman as related to both worlds, as being bound to this by the ties of a wife, a mother, and a mistress; and to that which is to come, by the grander and more enduring bond of immortality; and therefore, as having not only social excellence to obtain, but that which is individual in special relation to God, and heaven, and eternity. I have contemplated you, my young friends, as the future wives, mothers, and mistresses of the next generation, and have endeavored to prepare you for discharging the functions of these momentous relationships. It has been my aim in these sermons, to open and prepare for you a smooth passage through this earthly state, gathering out as many stones, and planting as many flowers, as I could. And imperfect as may have been my counsels, and defective as may have been my views, I am confident that if my advice be taken

and my rules observed, though there may be much sorrow in reserve for you, there will not be wanting a tolerable share of consolation and happiness. It will be *your* fault, not *mine*, if life be a dreary blank—a desert without an oasis—a wilderness without a spring.

But I have looked beyond this world, to that state, where I see you, with all these tender ties dropped from around you, and you yourself standing alone in your individuality and immortality. I am duly aware, and I wish *you* to be so, that you sustain a personal relationship to God, which requires an appropriate and prescribed line of conduct toward him, and for the neglect of which, no other duties, excellences, or merits whatever, can be a substitute. It is not merely what you have been as a woman in society, or as a wife, a mother, or a mistress in the family, but what you have been toward God, that will decide your lot in the day of judgment. You may have been the most exalted, and noble, and learned of women, the most faithful of wives, the most devoted of mothers, and the kindest of mistresses; but if all this, while you have not had repentance toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus, and true holiness, these domestic virtues, as they had in themselves no relation, and in their performance, no reference to God, so in the end they will meet no recompense from him, and instead of hearing him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant," you will hear nothing more than "They *had* their reward."

Young women, contemplate your situation as I do, and as I now present it to you. There, further than the eye can reach, stretches out the vast plain of earthly existence, with all its varied landscape, its numerous roads, its busy population, its duties, its pleasures, and its dangers: and there are you, traveling across it, and needing guidance, assistance, protection, and comfort by the way. Step by step you are going on, never stopping, but ever advancing—to what? To that boundless ocean of eternity which lies beyond, on which you must soon embark, and on which so many of your fellow-travelers are every hour adventuring. Yes, yes, you are emigrants passing through time to embark for eternity; and ought you not, like other emigrants, to prepare for the voyage, and for the country to which you are going? Shall your attention be so taken up with the plain across which you are traveling, as to forget your embarkation upon the ocean that lies beyond it? Does one of all the emigrants which are now crowding to our colonies, forget for a waking moment, after his determination is fixed, that he is soon to leave his country for one across the sea? Oh, no. And will *you* forget that you must soon—how soon you know not; perhaps next year, or next month—emigrate to eternity? By what motive shall I induce you to prepare for eternity? What? Only by itself, for if eternity be not strong enough to induce you to prepare *for* eternity, by what other motive can I hope to succeed?

I now, in conclusion, refer you to that day, and

that scene, when the results of all ministerial efforts —and of this among the rest—for the spiritual welfare of mankind, shall be ascertained and made public. Before that dread tribunal you and I must appear. Not an individual that has heard, or that shall read these discourses, will be absent; and among the things then to be brought into judgment will be this feeble, yet sincere and earnest, endeavor for your spiritual benefit. In reference to some of whom it will be said, I fear, I have been "the savor of death unto death;" while it is my prayer and my expectation, that to others I have been "the savor of life unto life." May there be very many of the latter description! "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming. For ye are our glory and joy.

THE END.

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